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THE

CHARGES

OF

SAMUEL HORSLEY,

LL.D. F.R.S. F.A.S.

LATE

LORD BISHOP OF ST. ASAPH,

DELIVERED AT HIS

SEVERAL VISITATIONS

OF THE

DIOCESES OF ST. DAVID'S, ROCHESTER, AND ST. ASAPH,

&c.

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THE

CHARGE

OF

SAMUEL, LORD BISHOP OF ST. DAVID'S,

TO

THE CLERGY OF HIS DIOCESE;

DELIVERED AT HIS PRIMARY VISITATION, IN THE YEAR 1790.

MY REVEREND BRETHREN,

THE principal object of episcopal visitation being the remedy or the prevention of such irregularities and abuses, as, without any impeachment of the general good intention and good conduct of the clergy, may be expected from time to time, through mere inadvertence, to creep in, — I should deem every moment lost to the immediate purpose of our meeting, which I were to consume either

in subtile disquisition upon abstruse points of speculation, or in general exhortation to awaken your zeal and industry in the duties of your sacred function. I trust that I address myself to men well taught in those mysteries of God of which they are the stewards; from many of whom I might myself be happy to receive instruction, — to faithful servants of the Lord who hath called us; who need no other incitement to their general duty than their own sense of the obligation that is laid upon them. The advice which I mean to offer upon the present occasion applies specially to your particular situation as called to the exercise of your ministry in these remote corners of the island, in congregations which, except in some of the greater towns, are composed almost entirely of the common people; and of such common people as, from their sequestered situation, are, of all their countrymen of the same degree, the least improved by early education, and of consequence the least prepared by any previous tuition to receive the instruction which it is your wish and your duty to convey.

It is a question of great moment, in itself not difficult, but involved in endless intricacies to those who take up the discussion with their minds posses-

sed with certain common prejudices, — and for that reason too often, I fear, erroneously decided, — "What is the proper *matter of instruction* in such congregations, more especially in the present circumstances of the established church?" I am of opinion, that to stop the progress of that new species of infidelity which is propagated by certain of the sectaries of the present day, as well as to cure the fanaticism of some weak but I trust well-intentioned members of our own communion, much might be done by the labours of the country parish-priest, — much more, indeed, than by the learned disquisitions of professed polemics; were it not that erroneous maxims are gone abroad, which for several years past, if my observation deceive me not, have very much governed the conduct of the parochial clergy in the ministration of the word.

A just abhorrence of those virulent animosities which in all ages since external persecution ceased have prevailed among Christians, especially, since the Reformation, among Protestants of the different denominations, upon the pretence at least of certain differences of opinion in points of nice and doubtful disputation, hath introduced and given general currency to a maxim, which seemed to promise

peace and unity by dismissing the cause or rather the pretence of dissension, —namely, that the laity, the more illiterate especially, have little concern with the mysteries of revealed religion, provided they be attentive to its duties: Whence it hath seemed a safe and certain conclusion, that it is more the office of a Christian teacher to press the practice of religion upon the consciences of his hearers, than to inculcate and assert its doctrines.

Again, a dread of the pernicious tendency of some extravagant opinions, which persons more to be esteemed for the warmth of their piety than the soundness of their judgment have grafted in modern times upon the doctrine of justification by faith, as it is stated in the 11th, 12th, and 13th of the articles of our church (which, however, is no private tenet of the Church of England, but the common doctrine of all the first reformers, not to say that it is the very corner-stone of the whole system of redemption), —a dread of the pernicious tendency of those extravagant opinions which seem to emancipate the believer from the authority of all moral law, — hath given general credit to another maxim, which I never hear without extreme concern from the lips of a divine, either from the pulpit or in

familiar conversation, — namely, that practical religion and morality are one and the same thing, — that moral duties constitute the whole or by far the better part of practical Christianity.

Both these maxims are erroneous; both, as far as they are received, have a pernicious influence on the ministry of the word. The first most absurdly separates practice from the motives of practice; the second, adopting that separation, reduces practical Christianity to heathen virtue; and the two, taken together, have much contributed to divest our sermons of the genuine spirit and savour of Christianity, and to reduce them to mere moral essays, in which moral duties are enforced, not, as indeed they might be to good purpose, by scriptural motives, but by such arguments as nowhere appear to so much advantage as in the writings of the heathen moralists, and are quite out of their place in the pulpit. The rules delivered may be observed to vary according to the temperament of the teacher; but the system chiefly in request with those who seem the most in earnest in this strain of preaching, is the strict, but impracticable, unsocial, sullen moral of the Stoics. Thus, under the influence of these two pernicious maxims, it too often hap-

pens, that we lose sight of that which is our proper office to publish — the word of reconciliation; to propound the terms of peace and pardon to the penitent; and we make no other use of the high commission that we bear, than to come abroad one day in the seven, dressed in solemn looks, and in the external garb of holiness, to be the apes of Epictetus. I flatter myself that we are at present in a state of recovery from this delusion. The compositions which are at this day delivered from our pulpits are, I think, in general of a more Christian cast than were often heard some thirty years since, when I first entered on the ministry. Still the dry strain of moral preaching is too much in use, and the erroneous maxims on which the practice stands are not sufficiently exploded.

The first of the two, which excludes the laity from all concern with the doctrinal part of religion, and directs the preacher to let the doctrine take its chance, and to turn the whole attention of his hearers to practice, must tacitly assume for its foundation (for it can stand upon no other ground) this complex proposition,—not only that the practice of religious duties is a far more excellent thing in the life of man, far more ornamental of the Christian

profession, than any knowledge of the doctrine without the practice; but, moreover, that men may be brought to the practice of religion without previous instruction in its doctrines: or, in other words, that faith and practice are in their nature separable things. Now the former branch of this double assumption — that virtue is a more excellent thing in human life than knowledge, is unquestionably true; and a truth of great importance, which cannot be too frequently or too earnestly inculcated: But the second branch of the assumption — that faith and practice are separable things, is a gross mistake, or rather a manifest contradiction. Practical holiness is the end,—faith is the means; and to suppose faith and practice separable, is to suppose the end attainable without the use of means. The direct contrary is the truth: The practice of religion will always thrive in proportion as its doctrines are generally understood and firmly received; and the practice will degenerate and decay in proportion as the doctrine is misunderstood and neglected. It is true, therefore, that it is the great duty of a preacher of the gospel to press the practice of its precepts upon the consciences of men. But then it is equally true, that it is his duty to en-

force this practice in a particular way,—namely, by inculcating its doctrines. The motives which the revealed doctrines furnish, are the only motives he has to do with, and the only motives by which religious duty can be effectually enforced.

I am aware, that it has been very much the fashion to suppose a great want of capacity in the common people to be carried any great length in religious knowledge, more than in the abstruse sciences. That the world and all things in it had a Maker, — that the Maker of the world made man, and gave him the life which he now enjoys,—that he who first gave life can at any time restore it,—that he can punish, in a future life, crimes which he suffers to be committed with impunity in this,—some of these first principles of religion, the vulgar, it is supposed, may be brought to comprehend: But the peculiar doctrines of revelation,—the Trinity of Persons in the undivided Godhead, the incarnation of the Second Person, the expiation of sin by the Redeemer's sufferings and death, the efficacy of his intercession, the mysterious commerce of the believer's soul with the Divine Spirit, — these things are supposed to be far above their reach.

If this were really the case, the condition of mankind would indeed be miserable, and the proffer of mercy in the gospel little better than a mockery of their woe; for the consequence would be, that the common people could never be carried beyond the first principles of what is called natural religion. Of the efficacy of natural religion as a rule of action, the world has had the long experience of sixteen hundred years; for so much was the interval betwen the institution of the Mosaic church and the publication of the gospel. During that interval, certainly, if not from an earlier period, natural religion was left to try its powers on the heathen world. The result of the experiment is, that its powers are of no avail. Among the vulgar, natural religion never produced any effect at all; among the learned, much of it is to be found in their writings, little in their lives. But if this natural religion—a thing of no practical efficacy, as experiment hath demonstrated—be the utmost of religion which the common people can receive, then is our preaching vain, Christ died in vain, and man must still perish. Blessed be God, the case is far otherwise. As we have, on the one side, experimental proof of the insignificance of what is called natural religion,

so, on the other, in the success of the first preachers of Christianity, we have an experimental proof of the sufficiency of revealed religion to those very ends in which natural religion failed. In their success we have experimental proof, that there is nothing in the great mystery of godliness which the vulgar more than the learned want capacity to apprehend; since, upon the first preaching of the gospel, the illiterate, the scorn of Pharisaical pride, who knew not the law, and were therefore deemed accursed, were the first to understand and to embrace the Christian doctrine.

Nor will this seem strange, if it be considered, that religion and science are very different things, and the objects of different faculties. Science is the object of natural reason; religious truth, of faith. Faith, like the natural faculties, may be improved by exercise; but in its beginning it is unquestionably a distinct gift of God. Were it otherwise, the common people would be just as incapable of receiving those principles of natural religion which are thought so simple, and so much within the reach of popular apprehension, as the higher mysteries of the gospel; for I scruple not to assert, that no proof can be more subtile in its

process, or in its principles more abstruse, however just in its conclusions, than the arguments which philosophy furnishes of the being and attributes of God and the immortality of the human soul. By mere argument therefore, addressed to their reason, no conviction could be wrought in the minds of the common people of the very first principles of religion. By faith, their minds are opened to apprehend all that is revealed of the scheme of redemption, no less than the very first principles, the doctrine of a resurrection, or the first creation of the world out of nothing. Let me entreat you, therefore, my reverend brethren, to discard these injurious uncharitable surmises of a want of capacity in your hearers. A want of capacity in these subjects is a want of faith; and the surmise of a want of faith in the common people, more than in their betters, is in truth a distrust of God, —as if he would be wanting to his own work, and fail to give all men faith to receive a discovery made by his express command, or rather by himself, to all, of a scheme of mercy in which all are interested. Pray earnestly to God to assist the ministration of the word, by the secret influence of his Holy Spirit on the minds of your hearers; and

nothing doubting that your prayers are heard, however mean and illiterate the congregation may be in which you exercise your sacred function, fear not to set before them the whole counsel of God. Open the whole of your message without reservation; that every one of you may have confidence to say, when he shall be called upon to give an account of his stewardship, "Lord, I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have not concealed thy loving-kindness and truth from the great congregation."

The second maxim—that mere morality makes the sum and substance of practical religion, carries in it a double falsehood: It contracts the range of Christian duty; and it totally misrepresents the formal nature of the thing. In direct contradiction to this wicked maxim, I affirm, that although religion includes morality, as the greater perfection includes the less,—so that an immoral man cannot be religious,—yet a man may be irreproachable in his moral conduct and at the same time perfectly irreligious and profane; irreligious and profane in that extreme, as to be in danger of being cast at last into outer darkness, with his whole load of moral merit on his back. The notion that reli-

gion and morality are the same, generally as it hath too long prevailed, needs no other confutation but what will spontaneously arise from a just definition of the terms. Religion, in the practical part, is a studious conformity of our actions, our wills, and our appetites, to the revealed will of God, in pure regard to the Divine authority, and to the relation in which we stand to God as discovered to us by revelation: Morality is a conformity of our actions to the relation in which we stand to each other in civil society. Morality, therefore, comprehends some considerable part, but a part only, of the duties of the second table. Morality enjoins filial piety; it prohibits murder, adultery, theft, false witness, and those inferior crimes which, for the like harm that in a less degree they bring to society, or to the individual in society, bear affinity to these as to the heads of so many different species. But does morality say "Thou shalt not covet?" Does the control of moral obligation reach the secret meditations of the mind, and the silent desires of the heart? does it impose restraint upon the sensuality of the imagination and the private prurience of appetite? Like the Divine law, does it extend to every secret energy of the mind, the will, and the ap-

petite; and require the obedience of the inner no less than of the outer man? Again, doth morality say "Thou shalt love thine enemies; thou shalt bless them that curse, do good to them that persecute?" Doth morality enjoin forgiveness of injuries, or the giving of alms to the poor?—Truly morality "careth for none of these things." How small a part then of social duty, of a Christian's social duty, is the utmost which morality exacts? and how fatally are they misled who are taught that mere morality satisfies the law by which the Christian shall be judged, even in the inferior branch of the love of our neighbour?

With the higher branch of duty—with the love of God, and of consequence with the duties of the first table, morality hath evidently no concern or connection. The worship which I owe to God is certainly no part of the duty which I owe to man: it is indifferent to morality whether I worship one god or many; morality is not offended if I worship graven images; morality enjoins no observance of one day in seven—no feast of faith in sacramental rites upon the body and blood of the Redeemer: For reason—from which morality derives her whole authority and information—reason knows not till

she hath been taught by the lively oracles of God, that the Creator of the world is the sole object of worship; she knows of no prohibition of particular modes of worship; she knows nothing of the creation of the world in seven days—nothing of redemption—nothing of the spiritual life, and the food brought down from heaven for its sustenance. Morality, therefore, having no better instructress than this ignorant reason, hath no sense or knowledge of any part of that great branch of duty which comes under the general title of devotion. Let me conjure you, therefore, my brethren, to be cautious how you admit, much more how you propagate, that delusive dangerous maxim "that morality is the sum of practical religion," lest you place the totality and perfection of the thing in a very inconsiderable part.

Perhaps you will recur to the etymology of the word; you will contend with me, that the word "morality," in its natural import, comprehends every thing which belongs to manners,—that devotional, no less than social habits, make a part of the manners of a man,—and because the man's thoughts, passions, appetites, form his habits and influence his actions, that they also may be considered as a

very essential part of manners, — that morality therefore, in the natural import of the word, is precisely of the same extent with practical religion, embracing every branch of man's duty to God, his neighbour, and himself; since, whatever is irreligious in thought, word, or deed, is, no less than an unjust action, a defect or blemish in the manners of the man; — and using the word in this large meaning, you think you affirm nothing but the truth when you say that morality is the sum and substance of practical religion.

My brethren, were you capable of advancing this argument, however it might raise my admiration of your grammatical skill, I must take leave to say, it would set you not high in my opinion as logicians, and still lower as divines; and yet I much suspect that many have imposed upon themselves by this very reasoning in the point in question. Morality, according to this interpretation of the word, is indeed the same thing with practical religion. In the maxim, therefore, which you would defend, substitute for the word "morality" those two words which in your apprehension render its exact meaning; you will then have before you the proposition you would defend enounced in

unequivocal terms. What is it? — Plainly this, Practical religion is the sum and substance of practical religion. My reverend brethren, is this the important truth we are sent abroad to publish? this the purport of our high and holy embassy? The insignificance of the proposition is not the worst part of it; the greater evil is, that it is stated in terms which hide the folly of it and mislead our hearers. The word "morality," in its public acceptation, carries no such extensive meaning as they ascribe to it in their private understanding who speak of it as the same thing with religion. It is rather a name of distinction, either for social duty as it was understood and practised among the heathen, without the additions and improvements of revealed religion, — or for those religious duties which are in themselves duties by an inherent fitness and propriety, demonstrable from the relation in which we stand to God our Creator and Redeemer, when once it is made known to us, without regard to any particular command. In the one or the other of these two senses, as distinguishing social duty from religious, or the primary duties of religion from the secondary, the word "morality" is used even among the learned; and the unlearned have no ap-

prehension of any other meaning. When we say, then, that morality and religion are the same, I fear we are generally understood to set aside all the additions and improvements of revealed religion, as things at the utmost of very inferior importance, or at least to set aside positive precepts.

I could propose an experiment by which it would be easy to determine how the people really understand us when we use this language. None here, I apprehend, would be at a loss to find among his own parishioners more than one person living in good credit and esteem among his neighbours, irreproachable in his general dealings with the world, a prudent manager of his affairs, and of consequence not addicted to any public scandalous excess; but, with all this, grossly negligent of religious ordinances. Go and expostulate with such a man: Tell him that you are sorry to observe that he is seldom seen at church, — that he never comes to the Lord's table, — that he never sends his children to you to be instructed in the catechism, — that from these symptoms, notwithstanding the general probity of his life, you are apprehensive he thinks less than it may be his interest to do about the concerns of futurity. The man, who is by no

means lost to all sense of duty, will take your admonition in good part; but he will defend himself; and his defence will be that he is at least a *moral* man. Press him farther, — ask him what particular merit he means to attribute to himself under that character: Would he be understood to plead "not guilty" to your accusation? would he pretend that he is a scrupulous observer of the Sabbath — never absent without necessity from public worship, and frequent in his attendance on the Lord's table? — He will confess to you that he means no such thing; the contrary is notorious, and he would be sorry to be thought capable of setting his face to so gross a falsehood. Does he mean, that notwithstanding his neglect of the external forms of religion, he hath still been exacting the better part — in the social duties of the Christian life? — that he is liberal in alms, tender-hearted to the poor, slow to anger, patient of injuries, ready to forgive, — that his affections are so set on heavenly things that he is cautious of excess in the use even of lawful pleasure? — Nothing of all this: The man is no hypocrite; he will not pretend that his life will bear so strict a scrutiny. But still he is a *moral* man, — that is to say (for every thing more is excluded by his own

confessions), he is no murderer, no adulterer, no thief, no liar, no spendthrift; and, with nothing more of the Christian character about him than is supposed to be contained in the negation of these crimes, he hopes to find admission into the kingdom of heaven; for if at any time he hath chanced to drop in while you have been preaching, he has heard you tell your congregation that morality is all in all.

Again, religion and morality differ, not only in the extent of the duty they prescribe, but in the part in which they are the same in the external work: They differ in the motive; they are just as far asunder as heaven is from the earth. Morality finds all her motives here below: Religion fetches all her motives from above. The highest principle in morals is a just regard to the rights of each other in civil society: The first principle in religion is the love of God, — or, in other words, a regard to the relation which we bear to him, as it is made known to us by Revelation; and no action is religious, otherwise than as it respects God, and proceeds from a sense of our duty to him, or at least is regulated by a sense of that duty. Hence it follows, as I have before observed, that although religion can never be

immoral, because moral works are a part of the works of religion, yet morality may be irreligious; for any moral work may proceed from mere moral motives, apart from all religious considerations: And if a moral work be done by a person not sufficiently instructed in religion to act upon religious considerations, it cannot proceed from any other than mere moral motives; and of consequence, it must in that instance be irreligious, — not contrary to religion, but without it.

Upon this ground stands the doctrine of the first reformers, concerning works done before justification, which is laid down in the 13th of our Articles, — "Works done before the grace of Christ and the inspiration of his Spirit are not pleasant to God; forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ, neither do they make men meet to receive grace, or (as the school authors say) deserve grace of congruity; yea rather, for that they are not done as God had commanded and willed them to be done, we doubt not (saith the Church) but that they have the nature of sin." Not that they are in such sort sins, that in the mere overt act, without consideration had of the obliquity of the motive, they add to the guilt of the doer of them; but being

done without any thought of God, though not in defiance and despite of him, they have nothing in them that should make them pass for marks or symptoms of the regenerate character: On the contrary, in all these works merely moral, the Atheist may be as perfect as the Christian.

And this explains what at the first sight may seem a strange fact in the history of man, and is very apt to be misinterpreted, as if it disproved the connexion which divines are desirous to maintain between the truth of religious opinion and true practical godliness, — namely, that Infidelity and Atheism boast among their disciples eminent examples of moral rectitude. History records, I think, of Servetus, Spinoza, and Hobbes, that they were men of the strictest morals; the memory of the living witnesses the same of Hume; and history in some future day may have to record the same of Priestley and Lindsay. But let not the morality of their lives be mistaken for an instance of a righteous practice resulting from a perverse faith, or admitted as an argument of the indifference of error. Their moral works, if they be not done as God hath willed and commanded such works to be done, have the nature of sin; and their religion, consisting

in private opinion and will-worship, is sin, for it is heresy.

You see, my brethren, of what importance it is to the edification of your people that you maintain the distinction between religion and morality, and set forth the superior excellence of the former both in the external and the internal part. An over-abundant zeal to check the phrensy of the Methodists first introduced that unscriptural language which confounds the two; and an apprehension that the prevalence of their numbers in these parts might make you too ready to adopt it hath induced me to discourse to you so largely upon the subject. Bear with me if I add, that the propagation of Methodism hath been less owing to its own powers than to the injudicious manner in which it hath been resisted. In the controversy about faith and works, either side of the question hath had pious, learned, and enlightened men among its advocates. When the pious, the learned, and the wise, on both sides, explain, the controversy turns out to be a mere contest about words; the matter in dispute being nothing more than this, — in what words a proposition in which all agree may be best enounced. That man is justified by faith, without the works of the law,

was the uniform doctrine of the first reformers. It is a far more ancient doctrine, — it was the doctrine of the whole college of apostles: It is more ancient still, — it was the doctrine of the prophets: It is older than the prophets, — it was the religion of the patriarchs. And no one who hath the least acquaintance with the writings of the first reformers will impute to them, more than to the patriarchs, the prophets, or apostles, the absurd opinion, that any man leading an impenitent wicked life, will finally, upon the mere pretence of faith (and faith connected with an impenitent life must always be a mere pretence), obtain admission into heaven. Whether our Methodists are justly chargeable with this Antinomian doctrine, is what I will not take upon me to decide; I would charitably hope that it is to be found only in the language of the more illiterate of their teachers: Whether they be justly charged with it or no, it is your duty to be careful, that, in your anxiety to expose this folly, you yourselves run not into the opposite extreme of the Pelagian heresy. Be careful, that you ascribe no such merit to the good works of men as may claim immortality as the wages of a service, — that you ascribe no power to man to perform works truly good without the assist-

ance of the Divine Spirit. But then, be careful, on the other hand, to explain on what ground merit is denied to the best works of the faithful. It is not that the works in themselves are not good — such as being well done would be meritorious — such that the leaving of them undone, or the doing of them with negligence and indifference, while we profess to be believers, is a deceiving of our own souls: But the want of merit lies in the imperfection and deficiency of our best performances. And remember always to inculcate, that in this respect our faith is no less defective than our works, — that it is not by the *merit* of our faith, more than by the *merit* of our works, that we are justified, — that there is, indeed, no hope for any merit of our own, but through the efficacy of our Lord's atonement; for that we are justified by faith, is not on account of any merit in our faith, but because faith is the first principle of that communion between the believer's soul and the Divine Spirit on which the whole of our spiritual life depends. These doctrines are delivered with admirable perspicuity and precision in the Homilies of our Church upon these subjects: "The Misery of all Mankind;" — "the Salvation of Mankind by Christ;" — "the True

Lively and Christian Faith;" and Good Works annexed to Faith." These discourses I would earnestly recommend to your frequent study, as an unexceptionable summary of doctrine upon these important points, and an excellent model of composition for popular instruction. Were you in a situation to procure scarce books for yourselves, or to have easy access to well-furnished libraries, I should recommend a perusal of the "Confession of Faith of the Church of Saxony," with the elucidations upon particular points which are to be found in the works of Philip Melancthon; and, as a preservative of your own minds from the contagion of the Antinomian folly, I would recommend the "Harmonia Apostolica" of my illustrious predecessor, Bishop Bull. I am much mistaken, if a proper diligence on our own parts to inculcate these doctrines (which are indeed the very basis of the Christian system), which the philosophizers of the present times explain away, and the illiterate enthusiast by the meanness of his style and the absurdity of his illustrations too often burlesques, — I am mistaken, if a proper diligence on our part to inculcate these doctrines would not soon supersede the necessity of all controversy. Truth deeply planted in the public mind would keep

possession by its own native strength: The common people, made proficients in the faith, however in other respects illiterate and accustomed to the doctrine originally delivered to the saints, would turn with horror from every thing of a contrary sound; nourished with the sincere milk of the word by their proper pastors, they would refuse a drink of doubtful quality mingled by a stranger: In a word, our churches would be thronged; while the moralising Unitarian would be left to read his dull weekly lecture to the walls of his deserted conventicle, and the field-preacher would bellow unregarded to the wilderness.

There is yet another thing to be done for the security of the common people from delusion. The great crime and folly of the Methodists consists not so much in heterodoxy as in fanaticism, — not in perverse doctrine, but rather in a disorderly zeal for the propagation of the truth; which is the pretence for that irregular ministry which is exercised by their teachers, encouraged by the leaders of the sect, and greedily followed by the people. The immediate remedy for this evil, and indeed the best security against the seductions of false teachers of all denominations, would be, that our laity

should be frequently taught with what hazard to himself the private Christian officiously meddles in the preacher's office, — how strictly it is required of him to submit himself to those teachers who are by due authority set over the people to watch over their souls.

Upon these topics the clergy of late years have been more silent than is perfectly consistent with their duty; from a fear, as I conceive, of acquiring the name and reputation of high-churchmen. But, my brethren, you will not be scared from your duty by the idle terror of a nickname, artfully applied, in violation of the true meaning of the word, to entrap the judgment of the many, and bring the discredit of a folly long since eradicated upon principles which have no connexion with it. You promote the stratagem of your enemies, you are assisting in the fraud upon the public, and you are accessaries to the injury to yourselves, if you give way to a dread of the imputation. To be a high-churchman, in the only sense which the word can be allowed to bear, as applicable to any in the present day, — God forbid that this should ever cease to be my public pretension, my pride, my glory! To be a high-churchman in the true import of the word

in the English language, — God forbid that ever I should deserve the imputation! A high-churchman, in the true sense of the word, is one that is a bigot to the secular rights of the priesthood, — one who claims for the hierarchy, upon pretence of a right inherent in the sacred office, all those powers, honours, and emoluments, which they enjoy under an establishment; which are held indeed by no other tenure than at the will of the prince or by the law of the land. To the prince or to the law we acknowledge ourselves indebted for all our secular possessions — for the rank and dignity annexed to the superior order of the clergy — for our secular authority — for the jurisdiction of our courts, and for every civil effect which follows the exercise of our spiritual authority. All these rights and honours, with which the priesthood is adorned by the piety of the civil magistrate, are quite distinct from the spiritual commission which we bear for the administration of our Lord's proper kingdom. They have no necessary connexion with it: They stand merely on the ground of human law; and vary, like the rights of other citizens, as the laws which create them vary; and in every church connected like our church with the state by an establishment,

even the spiritual authority cannot be conferred without the consent of the supreme civil magistrate. But in the language of our modern sectaries, every one is a high-churchman who is not unwilling to recognise so much as the spiritual authority of the priesthood, — every one who, denying what we ourselves disclaim, any thing of a divine right to temporalities, acknowledges, however, in the sacred character, somewhat more divine than may belong to the mere hired servants of the state or of the laity; and regards the service which we are thought to perform for our pay as something more than a part to be gravely played in the drama of human politics. My reverend brethren, we must be content to be high-churchmen according to this usage of the word, or we cannot be churchmen at all; for he who thinks of God's ministers as the mere servants of the state, is out of the church — severed from it by a kind of self-excommunication. Much charitable allowance is to be made for the errors of the laity upon points to which it is hardly to be expected they should turn their attention of their own accord, and upon which, for some time past, they have been very imperfectly instructed. Dissenters are to be judged with much candour,

and with every possible allowance for the prejudices of education. But for those who have been nurtured in the bosom of the church, and have gained admission to the ministry, if from a mean compliance with the humour of the age, or ambitious of the fame of *liberality of sentiment* (for under that specious name a profane indifference is made to pass for an accomplishment), they affect to join in the disavowal of the authority which they share, or are silent when the validity of their divine commission is called in question,—for any (I hope they are few) who hide this weakness of faith, this poverty of religious principle, under the attire of a gown and cassock, they are in my estimation little better than infidels in masquerade.

To fortify your own principles, and to qualify yourselves to give the laity the instruction they so much need in this important subject — of the deference due from the private Christian, in matters purely spiritual, to the authority of the church, and to a ministry of divine institution, — I would advise that you make the writings that remain of the apostolical fathers, more especially of St. Clement and St. Ignatius, your constant study. They may be read either in the original, or in Bishop

Wake's translation. Much edification on the same subject is to be drawn from the "Ecclesiastical Polity" of the learned Hooker; and from the writings of an eminent divine of the Church of Ireland in the last century — the celebrated Charles Leslie. And to the younger clergy more especially, as an introduction to these necessary studies, — and to all, as an excellent commentary of first principles, which may suggest some of the best topics of popular discourse upon this important question of church authority, — I would earnestly recommend a tract which was printed at Gloucester in the year 1787, under the title of "An Essay on the Church." It is the work of a venerable clergyman in the diocese of Norwich, to whom the world is indebted for many valuable disquisitions in divinity and in other subjects, and for a popular tract against the errors of the Socinians, which hath been circulated with good effect in all parts of the kingdom, to the amount of several thousand copies, by the Society for the Promoting of Christian Knowledge.

THE

CHARGE

OF

SAMUEL, LORD BISHOP OF ROCHESTER,

TO

THE CLERGY OF HIS DIOCESE;

DELIVERED AT HIS PRIMARY VISITATION, IN THE YEAR 1796.

MY REVEREND BRETHREN,

WE are fallen upon times which more perhaps than any which the Christian church hath seen, since its first struggles with the powers of darkness in the three first centuries, require in the preachers of the Gospel those two qualities in particular which our Lord told the Twelve he required in *them*, when first he invested them with their high commission, — the policy of the serpent, united with the harmlessness of the dove.

Those first preachers were sent forth upon a work of singular difficulty; — in which, it is obvious, that so far as any human talents were in any degree concerned in the effect that was to be wrought, policy was of all others a most essential requisite to regulate the measures that were to be used for the final success of so extraordinary an enterprise; which was of a nature to excite in the first outset, as in fact it did excite, the enmity and opposition of all mankind. The Apostles were to preach up a religion which in its doctrines and its worship was shocking in the first place to the prejudices of their own countrymen, superstitiously attached to the Mosaic institution, ill understood: Among the heathen, they had to encounter prejudices no less inveterate, arising from the general devotion of the nations to an idolatry grown venerable by its antiquity, and calculated to captivate the many, by the pomp of its rites, the magnificence of its temples, and the gaiety of its festivals: They had in every country to struggle with that which by the very principles of their religion they were nowhere permitted to resist, the authority of government. The sovereigns of the world had long experienced the utility even of a

false religion to the purposes of social life; and they entertained apprehensions of the dangers of innovation. They, perhaps, besides, viewed the rising church in some degree with a jealous eye. They saw, or they knew by report, the internal good order of the society, — the conscientious submission of the laity to their spiritual pastors, the respectful attendance of the deacons upon the priests, and the obedience of the whole congregation to the bishop. They were perhaps apprehensive that the hierarchy might in time become the rival of the secular authority; for they knew not, that so long as it adhered to the genuine principles of Christianity, this could never be. They thought it prudent to take part with the old idolatry, as a religion already possessing the minds of the people to an extent sufficient for their purposes, while they, on the other hand, had the religion and its ministers perfectly at command. And upon these principles, — which were proved by the event to be in this case erroneous, but in any other than this single case of the Christian religion would have been just and sound policy, — the sovereigns of the world became persecutors. The pride of philosophy, too, was wounded by pretensions to discoveries which

were beyond its reach, in subjects which had been thought to be the most within its province. The philosophers ranged themselves on the side of the popular superstition; and the learning, the rhetoric, and the logic of their schools, were added to the host of adversaries to which the first preachers of our religion found themselves opposed.

It may seem, perhaps, at first sight, that our situation is in every particular the reverse of this: But it will be found, upon examination, that the change of circumstances, though much to our advantage in respect to our ease and comfort in the present world, is such, as not much to lessen the difficulty of our work, if we would do it well, but rather to render the objects of our policy more complex.

In the first place, to take the comparison in a retrograde order, the treasures of philosophy are very much in our possession, and the weapons of learning in our own hands. In this respect we have changed position with the enemy; and it is a great matter of policy, first, to form a true estimate of the vast importance of this advantage, and then to consider in what manner it may best be used.

The vast importance of the advantage arises

from its reference to another circumstance of great disadvantage on our side; and lies in this, — that it is the only thing we have to set against the want of that pre-eminent advantage which the first preachers exclusively enjoyed, the preternatural illumination of their understandings by the immediate operation of the Holy Ghost. Learning is to us the best substitute, — an imperfect substitute, but the best and the only one that is now to be had; and sufficient, no doubt, since Providence sees not fit to supply us with any other for the exigencies of our present situation, — learning, I say, is to us the best substitute for that preternatural illumination of the understanding which was the privilege of the first preachers. They were qualified, without any previous study, for the office to which they were called, because they had that other source of fuller and more certain information. But if we inquire in what particular way the Holy Spirit, acting upon the understanding, gave these fishermen of Galilee the superiority which they displayed over the theology of the Sanhedrim and the metaphysics of the Porch and the Academy, — we shall find, if we turn for satisfaction upon the question to their writings, — we shall there find, what we should

call, if the thing had been learnt before, a ready and accurate recollection of the history of their own nation, and of what was closely connected with it, the universal antiquities of religion. Something always presented to their minds the particular events of ancient story which were most directly to the purpose of that particular argument in which they chanced at any time to be engaged. We find them happy in applications of the prophecies, able expositors of those adumbrations of the scheme of redemption which were contained in the mystic rites of the Mosaic law; we find them learned in the jurisprudence of their country; and in their reasonings upon the most abstruse subjects, we find a self-evidence of the principles assumed, a coherence of the argument pursued, a solidity of the conclusion deduced, a justness of distinction, and a perspicuity of language, not surpassed by any thing of the same kind in the very best of the Greek writers. Whence the conclusion seems inevitable, that the knowledge which the Holy Spirit conveyed to the understandings of these chosen instruments of God, was the very same in kind, consisting of the same particulars, which in the ordinary way is attained in a more imperfect degree

by study. You will carefully observe, my reverend brethren, that when I compare the effect and fruit of study with the gift and operation of the Holy Ghost, I speak of that operation only which produced a miraculous information of the understanding of the first preachers, and chiefly for the purpose of controversy with gainsayers. The sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit upon the heart of the believer is quite another thing; and though far more general, being indeed universal, it is an operation of a much higher order. If ever this influence is withdrawn, the man is lost; nothing within the reach of man's industry can supply the want of it. But the miraculous infusion of knowledge which was peculiar to the first preachers, may be in some degree supplied, certainly in a sufficient degree for the work of the ministry in these times, by knowledge acquired in the ordinary way; provided we fail not earnestly to pray to the Father of Lights to bless our diligence in the pursuit of it, and to turn it to his glory. If therefore it be an object of our policy to execute our task in a manner that may at all agree with the example of the first preachers, and command the respect and reverence of the world, a very great proportion of our leisure,

— by our leisure, I mean so much of our time as is not engaged in the actual labours of the ministry, — in preaching the word, administering the sacraments, and visiting the sick — and in a necessary attention to our secular concerns, — so much of a clergyman's time as is not thus engaged should be devoted in the far greater part to a diligent pursuit of science and literature. It is not indeed necessary that every moment of his time should be employed in the immediate studies of the profession, — though the profession is an object of which he never should lose sight; but there is hardly any branch of polite learning or abstract science which may not be made subservient to it, and many are of absolute necessity. A man is not, literally speaking, studying divinity when he is learning the grammar of the Hebrew language; but he is acquiring that which whoever wants, wants, I had almost said, an essential accomplishment of a divine. A man may seem still farther from the study of divinity when he is learning the elements of the conic sections; but he is learning that without which he never will be a proficient in natural philosophy; and without some good proficiency in natural philosophy, he will be an incompetent expositor of many parts of the Bible.

It might easily be shown, that a divine will not be the worse accomplished in his profession for an accurate knowledge of the proportions of architecture or the divisions of the musical chord. I choose these instances, because they are things which at first sight seem to relate only to the elegancies of the present life: And what I mean to infer is this, — that since so many branches of knowledge are of necessity to the divine, — languages, for instance, ancient and modern, — history, ancient and modern, sacred and profane, secular and ecclesiastical, — ethics, politics, and jurisprudence in their general principles, — metaphysics, and many others which it were tedious to enumerate, — since all these are necessary, and since so many more than are of absolute necessity may be made useful, a clergyman is by no means to be supposed to misemploy every moment of his time which is not bestowed upon the study of divinity properly so called; but it certainly is his duty, and it will be the best policy of his conduct, under the absence of that miraculous infused learning which was peculiar to the first ages, to devote his time to a variety of literary pursuits. He will pay due attention to his ordination vow; he will give himself wholly to

his office as his principal business, and will draw all his cares and studies that way; and, under the influence and regulation of this principle, there is hardly any branch of learning or of science on which some portion of his time may not laudably and profitably for himself and for the church of God be bestowed.

I must indeed distinctly make exception of one study, if study it may be called, which has lately begun to come into credit with the younger clergy; which my imagination cannot in the remotest degree connect with the business of our profession, nor reconcile the pursuit of it with the good policy of a clergyman's conduct. It is become the practice among many of the younger clergy, to shut up their books when they quit the university, and to think no more of literature sacred or profane. The practice is too manifest to be denied; for they who are to be found in every season of the year, and at every hour of the day, in circles of dissipation (and every season and every hour has now its appropriate amusement), are not likely to be found at any time in their studies. Their defence is, that although they read but little—nothing indeed beyond a review or magazine, they are engaged in a most

edifying study: They tell us gravely they are *studying men;* and the knowledge of man, they say, is infinitely more useful than that of books, and must be of particular importance to those who by profession are the teachers of mankind.

My reverend brethren, the philosophical knowledge of man, that last work of the Creator — that wonderful compound of brute matter, of life, the vegetable and the animal, of soul, and of intellect, — the knowledge of the structure and mechanism of this creature's body, of its mental faculties, of its passions and its appetites — how its passions and its appetites modify its faculties — of the mixed sway of appetite and judgment over its actions, — this knowledge of man forms indeed a science of the highest curiosity and of the first importance; of particular importance to the divine, as it is nearly connected with that which is his proper province — the knowledge of this creature's fallen state, and of the means provided for its recovery. But this knowledge of man is not to be acquired without much abstract study and intense application. It is best acquired by those who add to much retired meditation of the subject accurate observation of what is passing in the world, and in a mixed

life of business and speculation have opportunity to notice the natural spring and play of the talents and passions of man, in all the variety of combinations in which they are exhibited upon the world's vast theatre. It is never to be picked up in the giddy rounds of folly: It is not to be acquired by an incessant attendance in scenes of dissipated pleasure; where every man's specific character, if he has any, is obliterated in the gaiety of the moment; and, except in those infamous nocturnal revels in which clergymen, it is hoped, never mix — infamous though held in private families of no mean distinction, where the passions are kept upon the rack by the vicissitudes of play, nothing is called forth to meet the observer's eye, but what these students of men need not stir from home to find — a certain insipid good-humoured insignificance of character, habitual to the majority of such assemblies, and induced for the moment in those of better habits.

So far as it has fallen in my way to observe the good effects of this study of men, they amount not certainly to what those who addict themselves to the pursuit tell us we might expect from it. I have never perceived among these juvenile divines

any extraordinary unction in the usual strain of their preaching; nor have I discovered any thing more seemly in the fashion of their lives than the common polish of good breeding: Of all that wear the garb of clergymen, they have certainly the least about them either of the policy of the serpent or of the harmlessness of the dove. And if the taste for this study of men, with a neglect of books and the true study of men, should become general among our younger brethren (which God avert!) the enemy in the next generation would be likely to regain the advantageous post we have for many centuries maintained.

When the Christian preacher of the present times has made a just estimate of the importance of human learning to the accomplishment of his character, the next object of his policy is to consider the manner in which it is to be used. This subject embraces so great a variety of matter, that I cannot upon the present occasion engage in the discussion of it in all its parts. I shall confine myself to a single point, which I conceive to be of great importance; and take the liberty to give you my opinion in what manner metaphysical learning in particular may be employed to serve the cause

of religion; for I have long been convinced, that, by a misuse of it, it has actually done upon the whole more harm than good. Now the safest rule by which a Christian divine may conduct himself in metaphysical researches, or in the use of metaphysical arguments, (researches which I would by no means dissuade, arguments which I would not be thought to undervalue,) the safest rule I take to be this, — that he never allow himself to philosophize, or at least to draw conclusions in theology upon philosophical reasonings, without his Bible. He may investigate, he may divide, compound, and hypothetically draw conclusions: But then, for a certain test of the truth of the conclusions so drawn, "to the Word and to the Testimony;" if they are not confirmed by that, "there is no light in them." In every thing relating to God — to the origin of evil — to a future state, he must divest himself of all the pride of philosophy, and implicitly resign his understanding to the authority of the written word. He is not to suppose, that in these subjects he can discover certain first principles by the natural strength of his own mind, and that he is at liberty to adjust the sense of the Scriptures to these principles of his own. It has

been much the practice with some of our metaphysical divines, to talk of natural religion and revealed religion as if they were distinct, and as if the former were the necessary foundation of the latter, — as if men by their natural talents had made certain discoveries of religious truths before revelation came, and revelation had only made additional discoveries in the same subject; and that for the right apprehension of these additions, those antecedent discoveries of reason and nature must be well understood.

Now it is very true, that many of the first principles of religion are capable of scientific proof. Such, in my judgment, are the immateriality, the omnipresence, and eternity of the Deity. The immateriality of the human soul, the natural immortality of the soul, and the probability of a future retribution, when the things have once been mentioned, may be made evident to man's natural reason. There are other particulars in the doctrines of revelation, which, if they are not to be received upon the authority of the revelation, or if the testimony of revelation should be lost, are incapable of any proof to men at all. Such are the doctrines of the Trinity, of the incarna-

tion, of atonement, and grace. Now, if we are to separate those parts of the revealed doctrine which are the easiest to man's natural apprehension, from the more difficult; and choose to call that assent which the mind may give to the first, merely as inference from argument, without regard to the testimony afforded by revelation, and without any knowledge of the rest of the revealed doctrine, — if we are to call this natural religion, I wish the name had never been introduced, because it has given occasion to mistakes: But the distinction may be of use; and it is not worth while to dispute about the name when the thing is understood. More or less of natural religion, in this sense of the words, was to be found among the heathen in all ages. But if it is implied, in this name of natural religion, that the very plainest of these truths was the discovery of man's own reason, before any revelation had been made, — I scruple not to deny, that any thing of a natural religion, in this sense of the words — a religion of man's own discovery (though you reduce it to the most simple principles), neither now exists nor was ever to be found in any part of the world. If we believe the sacred history, the visible intercourse of the Creator with

our first parents commenced with their existence, and was graciously continued with their posterity before and after the flood for several ages. The first revelations therefore were antecedent to any possible date of these pretended discoveries of reason; and from these early revelations came whatever we find of what is called natural religion among the heathen. Some of the first principles of these revelations laid strong hold upon the minds of men, and were traditionally remembered, when not only all the rest, but even the manner by which the knowledge of what was remembered first came into the world, was gone into utter oblivion. These traditional fragments of the creed of the protoplasts and the patriarchs made what is called the natural religion of the heathen of ancient times; and whatever notions of God and of a future state are to be found at this day among savages are to be referred to the same source. Reason, whatever its abilities may be, was never left to itself to try its strength in original discovery in these subjects. In argument, indeed, upon principles given, its strength was tried; it was left to itself, for many ages, to make the most of the few principles remembered: And much it made of

them in theory, nothing at all in practice. It was not unnatural for the heathen to imagine that they had been the discoverers of those truths which they found they could prove: But the conclusion, that reason was equal to the first discovery of these principles, because it can syllogize about them when propounded, is precarious. It is one thing to perceive the truth of a proposition once offered to the mind, and quite another for the mind to suggest the proposition to itself. And the question in this case is not abstract — what Reason may have the ability to do; the question is upon a matter of fact — what she did. Were these things, in point of fact, man's own discovery? — The sacred history is explicit that they were not. And notwithstanding the many useful lessons of morality we find in the writings of the heathen sages — the many eloquent discourses upon providence and the immortality of the soul — the many subtile disquisitions upon the great questions of necessity and moral freedom, upon fate and chance, — I am persuaded, that had it not been for the early communications of the Creator with mankind, man never would have raised the conceptions of his mind to the idea of a God, he never would have

dreamt of the immaterial principle within himself, and he never would have formed any general notions of right and wrong in the abstract; he would have had no religion, perhaps no morality. Revealed religion therefore stands not upon the ground of any antecedent discoveries of natural reason; and it is highly impolitic to attempt to place it upon any such false foundation: By itself it must stand or fall: It is in itself the first and the last, the beginning and the end. The prudent dispenser of the word will resort to revelation for his first principles, as well as for more mysterious truths. He will not trust to philosophy for any discoveries; he will suffer philosophy to be nothing more than his assistant in the study of the inspired word: She must herself be instructed by those lively oracles before she can be qualified to take part in the instruction of men. To lay the foundation of revelation upon any previous discoveries of reason, is in fact to make reason the superior teacher. It is not improbable, that idolatry itself had its first beginning in an early adoration of this phantom of natural religion — the idol, in later ages, of impolitic metaphysical divines.

A second circumstance in which our situation may seem the very reverse of that of the first preachers, is that we are not persecuted; we are protected, honoured, and caressed, by the sovereigns of the world. This indeed, at present, is our situation in the far greater part of Europe. Would God this state of things might be perpetual! but we shall do well to remember that it is otherwise ordained. The prophecies of the New Testament foretell that in the latter days perilous times will come—times of grievous and general persecution. The season of suffering will bring indeed this consolation with it, whenever it shall arrive, that it is to terminate in the final peace and triumph of the church. The signs of the times are such as may create an apprehension that the hour of trial is not far distant: Certainly, that in less than seven years a general persecution of the Christian name may be raging in every part of Europe, is far less improbable, in the present moment, than the tragical catastrophe of the church of France was, a twelvemonth before it happened. It is our policy, therefore, in these times not to be high-minded and secure, but to fear,—to think seriously beforehand to what we may be called,—to meditate on the glory

that awaits those who shall endure unto the end, and the shame that will light on those who shall fall away, — to pray for the succour of God's grace to support us in the hard conflict. If it shall please God, in his mercy, so to direct the storm that it come not nigh our dwelling, it will not harm us to have been prepared: Perhaps a serious devout preparation for the worst is the most likely means to avert the calamity, or at least to shorten its duration.

It may seem, again, that our situation is almost the reverse of that of the first Christians with respect to the tide of vulgar prejudice. The world, our Western world at least, for several ages has been Christian; and those who exercise the ministry in a country where, as in this, Christianity has taken root, have not to encounter any attachment of the people to any other religion in preference to the Christian: Popular opinion in this instance, fortunately for us, is on the side of truth.

The advantage of our situation in this respect, when it comes to be examined, will not be found so great as it may at first seem. It is very true that we have not to contend with any prejudice of mankind in general in favour of a religion different

from our own; the singularity of the times is that there are no prejudices in favour of any religion: But we have to encounter a malignant aversion of some part of the people to every thing that carries the name of religion; arising from that ferocious impatience of restraint, and those mad notions of liberty, which the fiend of French Democracy—the most wicked hateful fiend which Providence hath ever made the instrument of his wrath upon guilty nations—hath within the last six years spread throughout all Europe. The dismal scenes that have taken place in France—the misery in which that people was instantly plunged upon the overthrow of their august monarchy and their venerable church establishment—the sanguinary violence under which they have ever since groaned, have proved, I believe, a useful warning to this country. The example has damped the rising spirit of Jacobinism among us; and with the spirit of Jacobinism, it has damped the spirit of Irreligion; for these are twin-furies, which cannot have a separate existence. They are damped in such a degree, that I believe the enemies either of our constitutional monarchy or of our church are at present in proportion to the general body of the

people very few. I fear, however, that we are not to conclude that all who are not Jacobins are conscientiously or otherwise than politically attached to the Established Church, or even to the general cause of Christianity. I believe the laity of this country may be divided with respect to their religious sentiments into three classes. Those of the first class,—which I would hope, and do indeed believe, makes a very great majority of the whole people,—are Christians, not in name only and profession, but in conscience and in truth. Another very small class is composed of the Democratists,—void of all religion, and avowed enemies to its ministers. These are few, as I have said, in number; but they are loud in their invectives, and indefatigably busy in their machinations against all government civil and ecclesiastical. Between these two, there is a middle class; which may be called the class of the Moralists,—respectable serious men; but men who have never set themselves to think seriously about the intrinsic importance of religion, or the evidences of the truth and reality of revelation; and, being of a turn of mind not to take things upon trust, have rather perhaps a secret leaning to speculative infidelity. They are

friends, however, to religion, for its good services in civil life; but seeing nothing more in it, they would always take up with the religion which they find established; and upon that principle they unite themselves in profession to the Established Church. They have, perhaps, besides, something of a respect in preference for Christianity, on account of the purity of its moral precepts and the importance of the doctrine of retribution which it asserts; they have a respect in preference for the reformed churches, as maintaining the purest form of Christianity; and they have a respect in preference for the Church of England in particular, as the most considerable among the reformed. Now, of the people of this middle class, we may say, that "so long as we do well unto ourselves, these men will speak good of us." At present they are our friends. They consider us, however, as persons set to act a part. They are our friends, because they think the part we act essential to the good of the community; but that being the ground of their friendship, they will be our friends no longer than while we act it well. They consider the emoluments and privileges of the order as a pay that we receive from the public for the per-

formance of the part assigned us; and if they discover in us (and none will be more sharp-sighted to discover) any negligence in the execution, distant as they are in principle from the Democratists, they will be very apt to concur with them, one time or another, in some goodly project for the confiscation of our property and the abolition of our privileges.

It is a very important object of our policy, to retain the friendship and good opinion of this middle class, and to improve it what we can. And the means which an upright policy will suggest are very obvious: We have only to take care, that we adorn the doctrine of our Saviour by the example of our lives; and most of all, that we show, by diligence in the ministry, that our hearts and affections are seriously engaged in it. This conduct will attach to us the affections of our flocks; it will secure the friendship of the Moralists; and it will probably baffle, if it should not mitigate, the malice of our enemies. But a contrary conduct—any thing of sloth or lukewarmness in the labours of the ministry—any thing that may show more greediness of the gains of our office than concern for the duties of it, will scandalize the church of

God and give a handle to our enemies, and perhaps may provoke God to employ the fire of persecution to purge away the dross.

The conduct of the clergy of the Church of England, for some years past, in one particular, has not been exactly what their friends might wish, and an upright policy, attentive to the interests of the order as well as to the duties of the profession, would recommend. I speak of the very general practice among the beneficed clergy, of non-residence, and what necessarily results from it— a very insufficient performance of parochial duty: Nothing has so much lessened the general influence of the clergy; nothing so much threatens the stability of the national church. The evil of non-residence is much greater upon livings of small value than upon the more productive. If the revenues of a non-resident are narrow, he can make but a scanty allowance to his curate: The curate, finding the salary of one curacy insufficient for his maintenance, is reduced to the necessity of taking a second; he serves, as it is called, at least two parishes; and the consequence is, that divine service is performed but once each Lord's day in either church, — in the forenoon and evening, per-

haps, in the two alternately: The curate, in many cases, resides in neither of the parishes which he is said to serve; and, if his attendance be wanted on the dying or the sick, or baptism is suddenly to be administered to an infant in danger of death, he is not easily to be found.

I am well aware, that many non-residents are conscientiously engaged in various ways in promoting the general cause of Christianity; and are perhaps doing better service than if they confined themselves to the ordinary labours of the ministry in a country parish. It would be no less impolitic than harsh to call persons so employed to residence. I am well aware, that non-residence may often have a just excuse in considerations of another kind; and must, in such cases, be connived at. I must however declare that I acknowledge no connivance to be due, and as far as my own authority extends I will show no connivance, to the non-residence of the younger clergy who absent themselves from their parishes for no better purpose than "to study men" in the manner in which that delightful study is usually pursued by them.

But however justifiable non-residence may be in many cases, the non-resident in all cases is at least

bound in conscience to do to the utmost by another all that which he does not by himself. It is his duty to maintain a resident curate, with such a stipend, if the revenues of the living will afford it, as may supply the curate with a decent maintenance, without his engaging in a second cure, and doing but half the duty of both parishes. If the revenues of the living will not afford this provision for the curate, there must be something very singular in the case indeed to justify either the incumbent's non-residence or the bishop's connivance at it. The curate should be nominated to the bishop to be licensed by him; for two reasons,—both because this is the surest way to guard against the admission of improper persons, and because, in every parish, the person exercising the ministry ought to be completely amenable to the ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

I am not singular in the opinion I entertain, that the present omission of parochial duty is a great want of policy in the conduct of the clergy, and threatens the Established Church with the greatest danger. The size and growth of the evil has been thought of sufficient importance to engage the attention of the Legislature. In a late period

of the last Parliament, a bill was introduced in the House of Lords, upon the motion of the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, and has been passed into a law, providing certainly the gentlest remedy that could be devised. It generallv goes by the name of "The Curate's Act;" but the title of it is "An Act for the farther support and maintenance of curates within the Church of England, and for making certain regulations respecting the appointment of such curates, and the admission of persons to cures augmented by Queen Anne's bounty, with respect to the avoidance of other benefices." It passed almost in silence through the Upper House of Parliament; for as the general expedience of the measure was universally allowed, and the bill was originally drawn with the assistance of one of the greatest living ornaments of the bench of justice, and the clauses of it had been long under the consideration of the bishops, and had been revised and digested by the first practitioners both in the secular and the ecclesiastical courts,—there was nothing to occasion debate in its progress through the House of Lords. In the Lower House it received some alterations; but none but what were consistent with the general spirit and

purview of the bill, and such as, upon the whole, may be deemed amendments. Having reason to think that this bill is not well understood among the clergy, and feeling that it will be the duty of every bishop to enforce it, I shall detain you some little time longer to explain to you briefly the principal provisions of it.

It is certainly, both by the canon law and the statute law, the province of the bishop of the diocese to assign the stipends of the curates of non-residents. The scantiness of their stipends is a great aggravation, as I have explained at large, of the mischief of non-residence. This appears to have been a complaint of long standing; for so early in this century as the 12th of Queen Anne, we have an act "for the better maintenance of curates." This act confines the discretion of the bishop between the limits of 20*l.* as the least annual stipend to be granted, and 50*l.* as the greatest. It was probably a great relief to the curates at the time, that they could not be paid with less than 20*l. per annum*, and might have any thing between 20*l.* and 50*l.* at the discretion of the bishop. But in the present times, this statute of Queen Anne, by the change of the expenses of living, was be-

come a hardship upon the curates: For it is evident, that in all cases in which 50*l.* was not too much in the reign of Queen Anne, it would be greatly too little now; and yet it was the utmost stipend the bishop in any case could grant. The consequence was, that the bishop often thought it the best thing to be done for the curate to leave him to the liberality of the incumbent, and to connive at his officiating without a license; and this was a great blow upon the discipline of the church. The new statute has enlarged the limit of the bishop's discretion, carrying it to 75*l. per annum* in the shape of stipend, besides other emoluments, which I shall mention more particularly in their proper place.

I have understood, that some non-residents with small benefices have taken alarm, as if the stipend of every curate in the kingdom was forthwith to be raised to 75*l. per annum*, be the living great or small. But no such absurdity is to be found either in the spirit or in the letter of the act: The bishop is empowered to give 75*l.* when he thinks fit; he is in no case empowered to grant more; and he is in no case compelled to give so much: The *minimum* remains where the statute of Queen Anne fixes it,

at 20*l.*: And by this statute of Queen Anne, — which, you will observe, is not repealed, but is still in force, except so far as it is altered by this new statute, — the bishop is admonished, in assigning the stipend of the curate, "to have regard to the greatness of the cure and the value of the ecclesiastical benefice."

At the same time, it must be distinctly understood, that although regard is to be had to the value of the benefice, yet if 75*l. per annum* be considered as the greatest stipend to be allowed out of the greatest living, the incumbents upon poorer livings are not to expect that the stipends of their curates will be less in exact geometrical proportion to the less value of the benefice. No such rule can be adopted; for observe only to what an absurdity it would lead. Let us suppose, that upon a living of 750*l. per annum*, a stipend is assigned to the curate of the non-resident incumbent of 75*l.*; which is the most that can be assigned, though the annual value of the benefice were twice 750*l.*: The incumbent of the adjoining parish, we will suppose, is also a non-resident; but his living shall be worth but 100*l. per annum*: He comes, therefore, to the bishop, and he says, "You have assigned my neigh-

bour's curate 75*l.* *per annum;* which is just one tenth of the annual income of the living, for his living renders a clear annual income of 750*l.*: My living produces but 100*l.* *per annum;* therefore, by the rule of three, my curate must be paid with 10*l.* I should certainly pay no great attention to this conclusion, had the law left me at liberty; which it has not done, having fixed a *minimum:* And yet it is the true conclusion from this principle of proportion; which, because it leads to such impracticable conclusions, cannot be adopted. The truth is, that this is one of innumerable cases, in which the greater burden in proportion must fall upon the smaller income. It is well, in this case, that it does; because it magnifies — what every friend to the church must wish to see magnified — the inconvenience, to the beneficed clergy, of non-residence upon small livings: It magnifies this inconvenience just as it ought to be magnified, — that is to say, in proportion to the smallness of the living.

A more specious objection to this clause has been started, as I have heard, on the part of the curates. It has been said for them, that if it was the intention of the Legislature that their condition should be rendered now just what it was intended

to be in former times under the statute of Queen Anne, the discretionary power of the bishop should have been extended to 150*l.* rather than stopped at 75*l.*; for the increase of the expense of life, since the time of Queen Anne, has been at least in the proportion of one to three. I believe the estimate may be tolerably accurate, — that is to say, I believe that 150*l. per annum* in the present time will not purchase more of the conveniences of life than 50*l. per annum* would have purchased in the time of Queen Anne. But the claim of an advance of the stipend in this full proportion is beyond all measure of reason and equity, and is not to be endured. For the plain justice of the case is this, — the increase of the necessary articles of expense is an evil which ought to fall in even proportions upon all ranks of the community, and upon all incomes: Those, therefore, who subsist upon the salary of a service, have no equitable claim to an increase of salary proportional to the increased price of the articles of life, unless they can allege that the funds from which the salary is to proceed are increased in the same proportion; which is notoriously not the case of ecclesiastical benefices: To increase the salary in this full proportion, the incomes of those

who pay it being not so increased, would be to exempt the person receiving salary from his whole share of the burden of the increase of expenses, and to throw both shares upon the person paying it; — and the equity of this I cannot understand. A more reasonable demand would be, that the increase of the stipend should be in proportion to the average improvement of the revenues of ecclesiastical benefices; and I very much question, whether this improvement, since the time of Queen Anne, upon the average of all the livings in the kingdom, improved and unimproved, has been more than in the proportion of three to two; with which it happens that the proportion of the rise of stipend (to 75*l.* from 50*l.*) exactly corresponds. But the truth is, that neither of these proportions of increased expense or improved value was distinctly in contemplation in the framing of the bill: The intention was simply this, — to do as much as could be done for the curates, without imposing an excessive burden upon the beneficed clergy; and both parties, I trust, will find that they have reason to be satisfied.

In addition to this 75*l. per annum* at the utmost granted in the shape of stipend, the bishop or or-

dinary by this same clause is invested with a discretionary power of assigning to the curate, if the incumbent be not personally resident upon his living four months in the year at least, "the use of the rectory or vicarage-house, and the garden and stable thereunto belonging." The grant is to be by writing, under hand and seal of the bishop or ordinary, for twelve calendar months only; but with power in the bishop or ordinary to renew the grant from time to time. In case there should be no house upon the living, or the bishop or ordinary should not deem it convenient to allot and assign the same to the curate, he is authorized to assign to the curate, in lieu of such house, garden, and stable, a farther sum not exceeding 15*l.* *per annum*, over and above the stipend of 75*l.*: A proviso is added, that "the said house, garden, and stable, shall be for the use of the said curate and his family only during his actual residence in the said rectory and vicarage-house."

This power of granting the use of the house to the curate has raised great murmurs, as I am informed, among the beneficed clergy in some places. They argue against it thus: "It is not for our advantage that the curate should have the house.

The most that can be saved to us by the allotment of the house to his use, is 15*l. per annum ;* with the payment of which, at the utmost, we may be charged, if the house, with garden and stable, be not allotted. But leave us to choose our own tenants, and we shall often let our houses upon much better terms." Those who argue in this manner against the equity of the clause are certainly not aware that the letting of a rectorial or vicarage house to any other person but the curate was an illegal act before this statute passed,— positively forbidden, under heavy penalties, by the statute law, so long since as the reign of Elizabeth. Such houses were not intended to swell the emoluments of non-resident incumbents, but to afford a comfortable and convenient mansion for the officiating ministers; which in many places would not be to be found at all if a house were not appropriated. And for this reason, and to discourage non-residence, non-residents are restrained by statutes of Elizabeth, at first temporary, but since made perpetual, from leasing any part of the benefice (and the house is a very principal part of it), except to the curate only, and to him in particular cases only. The non-resident, therefore,

by this power over the house granted to the bishop, is not restrained in the freedom of any thing he could legally do before this act was passed; and the comfort of the curate, and the facility of his attendance on parochial duties, are very materially promoted by it.

I understand very well, that in many cases it might be a great hardship to an incumbent not totally non-resident, that the use of the house should be allotted to the curate, though the incumbent's residence should not usually amount to so much as four months in the year. I understand besides, that, in certain cases, the letting of the house to other than the curate, though not strictly legal, might be very properly connived at. But you will remember, that the bishop has the power of the alternative to allot the use of the house, or to grant an addition of stipend in lieu of it; and I cannot but suppose, that, in the exercise of this discretionary power, the bishop will attend to the circumstances of every case, and consult the convenience of both parties.

By the following clause, the bishop is impowered to insert in the grant of the house, garden, and stable, "such terms and conditions to be observed

on the part of the curate as he shall think reasonable" — to revoke the grant of the whole or any part of the premises, by writing under his hand and seal, at any time; and heavy penalties are imposed upon the curate if he shall refuse "peaceably to deliver up the possession of the premises granted to him at the expiration or other sooner determination of the grant thereof." The power of inserting conditions in the grant is in aid of the proviso at the end of the preceding clause, — to restrain the curate from making any other use of the premises than for the residence of himself and his family, — to restrain him from the admission of improper inmates, — from making alterations in the premises granted for his own accommodation to the prejudice of the estate, — to provide for the care of any articles of furniture which the incumbent may think proper to leave in the house, — and for many other things which may become the subject of such conditions, in which it will be much for the accommodation of both parties that the bishop should have authority to interfere. One is unwilling to suppose the case of a litigious curate; but laws must suppose and must provide against all possible cases. It would be a great hard-

ship upon the incumbent if he could not get possession of his own house, for his own use, even with the bishop's consent and approbation, without the expense and delay of a writ in ejectment. The power of revocation given to the bishop, and the necessity laid upon the curate of peaceably delivering up possession, secure the incumbent against this inconvenience. The penalties upon the curate have been thought enormous: But it is to be remembered, that the case in contemplation in these provisions is such as, I hope, will hardly ever happen; but if it should ever happen, it is a case in which moderate penalties would have no effect. It is not to be supposed that the bishop will ever suffer an abrupt expulsion of a curate, without reasonable notice, from the house in which his family is settled; but, on the other hand, it would be hard if the incumbent had not a more summary remedy against the obstinacy and caprice of a litigious temper than the ordinary forms of law afford.

The next clause, which is the third, in the latter part of it gives the bishop and the ordinary the same discretionary power of assigning the stipends of the officiating curates in perpetual cures augmented by Queen Anne's bounty, as are given to

them by the two former clauses in the case of benefices presentative. And the fifth clause extends those powers, under the like limitations, and with the like remedies, to the case of officiating curates in perpetual cures not augmented; for this very good reason, assigned in the preamble of the clause, — that "many such perpetual curacies, although not augmented by the bounty of Queen Anne, have nevertheless become considerable in value, by the improvement of the tithes or glebe of which they happen to be endowed, or by other circumstances."

The sixth clause of the act gives a power to the bishop or the ordinary which neither is supposed to have possessed before, and of which the beneficed clergy in some places are said to have expressed much jealousy. The bishop's power of appointing the curate's stipend, under the statute of Queen Anne, was in effect confined to curates licensed by the bishop upon the nomination of the incumbent: For it is enacted, "that if any rector or vicar having cure of souls, should, after the 29th day of September, 1714, nominate and present any curate to the bishop or ordinary, to be licensed or admitted to serve the cure of such

rector or vicar, the said bishop or ordinary, and so forth, shall appoint a sufficient certain stipend or allowance," &c. And again, "And if it shall appear to the bishop or ordinary, upon complaint or otherwise, that any curate of such rector or vicar, licensed or admitted before the 29th of September, 1714, had not a sufficient maintenance, it shall be lawful for the said bishop, &c. to appoint him a certain stipend," &c. The enacting words, you see, are such as confine the power of the bishop (though the thing, probably, was not intended) to curates nominated by rectors or vicars in order to be licensed, or already licensed under such nomination. Incumbents (for a reason which I shall mention presently) have for many years past been very unwilling that their curates should be licensed; they have been averse to a nomination of their curates: Few curates have been nominated; few have been licensed; few stipends have been fixed by the discretion of the bishop or ordinary: And thus, for many years past, the statute of Queen Anne, as far as it relates to this matter, has been a mere dead letter.

In the present statute, great care has been taken to avoid the error of our ancestors, and to use such

enacting words from beginning to end as might embrace all those cases which evaded the operation of the former act. By the third and fifth clauses, whatever discretionary power is given to the bishop and ordinary, with respect to the stipends of the curates of rectors and vicars, is extended to the stipends of clergymen officiating as curates under the incumbents upon those livings which are called perpetual curacies; and thus the operation of the act is extended to all incumbents, whether rectors or vicars or perpetual curates only. But besides this, in the first clause, the enacting words by which the bishop or ordinary is impowered to appoint the quantum of stipend are these: "That it shall and may be lawful for the bishop or ordinary to appoint under his hand and seal any stipend or allowance for any curate heretofore nominated or employed, or hereafter to be nominated or employed," &c.; and in every subsequent part of the act, in the description of the curate, whose stipend the bishop or ordinary is impowered to appoint, the words "or employed" are constantly added to the word "nominated;" or else, as in the fifth clause, the word "employed" is used alone, and the word "nominated" is omitted,

And by this form of the enacting words, the operation of the act is extended to all curates, or *quasi*-curates, — if that expression may be allowed to describe persons employed as curates but not nominated: For if a person be employed as a curate upon any rectory, vicarage, or perpetual curacy, though he hath not been nominated and is not licensed, the bishop or ordinary, as these clauses are expressed, hath full power to appoint him a stipend, and to compel payment of the stipend appointed in a summary way.

This, however, was not thought sufficient. The authority of the bishop to appoint the curate's stipend seemed a matter of too much importance to be trusted to constructions of words that might be in the least degree uncertain, — or to the distinction, very familiar to lawyers, but, as may appear by the inaccurate comments upon this statute which are already in print and in circulation, easily overlooked by others, — the distinction between the copulative "and" and the disjunctive "or." This sixth clause, therefore, was added; which puts the matter out of all doubt, expressly taking away from the incumbent the option, which the statute of Queen Anne had

inadvertently left with him, whether his curate should be licensed or no. This sixth clause gives a power to the ordinary "to license any curate who is or shall be actually employed by the rector, vicar, or other incumbent of any parish church or chapel; although no express nomination of such curate shall have been made, either in words or in writing, to the ordinary, by the said rector, vicar, or other incumbent:" So that, if an incumbent should be obstinate, and refuse to nominate, the ordinary may avail himself of the actual employment of the curate, as a virtual nomination, and proceed to license and assign him a stipend.

This clause contains another provision, of which, perhaps, the curates may be jealous. It gives the ordinary power "to revoke, summarily, and without process, any license granted to any curate employed within his jurisdiction, and to remove such curate, for such good and reasonable cause as he shall approve."

This power is granted to the ordinary for the ease of the incumbent. Incumbents, as I have said, have been very unwilling that their curates should be licensed. This unwillingness proceeded not from any general aversion to the canonical

authority of the bishop, but from an erroneous notion, that a curate, once licensed, could not be removed against his own will, even by the bishop, without a tedious and expensive process. The clergy were confirmed in this strange notion by conclusions which they were rather in haste to draw from the famous case of Martin against Hinde; the real merits of which have been little understood. Dr. Hinde indeed was put to much trouble and expense by that curate; and, to get rid of his curate, he was obliged at last to get rid of his living: But the difficulty of his case arose not from any licensing of the curate; — Dr. Hinde lay under the obligation of a title which he had given to Martin for priest's orders; and he had no proof against him of any such misconduct as could be deemed sufficient to annul that obligation. But the difficulty of his case was greatly aggravated by this very circumstance, that the curate was not licensed: Had Martin been a licensed curate, his action against the rector would not have lain in the secular courts; and the great Earl Mansfield, the venerable Lord Chief Justice of the times, is well known to have declared, that "had there been a license, he could not have interfered; he

must have sent the parties to their bishop." This statute, however, has effectually provided that no difficulty shall ever arise upon a license. If an incumbent has any reasonable cause to desire the removal of his curate, he will represent the case to the ordinary; and the ordinary, if he is satisfied with the cause, may summarily and without process remove the curate.

In both these cases — that of the appointment of a curate's stipend without nomination, and that of the revocation of a license without process — summary appeal is given to the archbishop of the province.

There is another matter in this statute, which makes a sort of rider, and has little or no connexion with its main object. The third clause in the former part declares a point of law with respect to augmented cures, — namely, that, though held by license, they are to be considered in law as benefices presentative to this effect, that one such living, together with another living, shall make a plurality. And the fourth clause quiets the present possessors of such pluralities in those possessions.

Thus I have given you a full detail of the contents of this statute — "The Curate's Act;" a most seasonable measure, in my judgment, to promote the interests of religion and exalt the credit of the Church of England. I think it becomes me now to declare, that the only condition upon which I will tolerate non-residence is, that a resident curate be retained, to be approved and licensed by me, and with such a stipend and such other emoluments as (regard being had to the greatness of the cure and the value of the benefice) it shall seem good to me, according to the spirit of this statute, to appoint. I have caught a whisper, — not in any part of this diocese; no matter where, — but I have caught a whisper which I cannot pass unnoticed. It is whispered that it will be a very easy matter to elude all the wise provisions of this act, by a civil contract between the non-resident incumbent and his substitute. I think it my duty to give explicit warning of the very bad policy of any such attempt, and the disappointment that must attend it. Any clergyman who shall presume to do the office of a curate, in any part of my diocese, without a regular license from me or my official, will be liable (without any regard

to this statute) to censures and penalties in the spiritual courts; of which I promise him he shall feel the utmost weight. And the non-resident who shall attempt any such evasions, will find that there are both canons and statutes against non-residence, of some or other of which, whatever may be dreamt of the privileges of particular situations, it will be difficult for him in any situation to escape the clutch. But this, my reverend brethren, is not said to you: it is replied to the ill-omened whisper of defiance that has fallen upon my ear. To you I look—to the ingenuous, learned, and exemplary clergy of this diocese, I look with the greatest confidence, for their cordial concurrence in the measures which may be necessary to carry into effect the wise and pious intention of this statute. It will reflect great disgrace upon the parochial clergy, if it should be reluctantly obeyed; and very great disgrace upon the bishops, if it be not vigorously enforced.

THE

CHARGE

OF

SAMUEL, LORD BISHOP OF ROCHESTER,

TO

THE CLERGY OF HIS DIOCESE;

DELIVERED AT HIS SECOND GENERAL VISITATION, IN THE YEAR 1800.

MY REVEREND BRETHREN,

No crisis at any period of time since the moment of our Lord's departure from the earth has more demanded than the present the vigilant attention of the clergy of all ranks and orders, from the prelate to the village curate, to the duties of the weighty charge to which we are called. When our Lord withdrew from us his visible presence, and committed the family to our stewardship, he left us not without explicit warning of the conflict

we should have for ages to sustain with the powers of darkness—the dangers we should have to encounter—and the sufferings which, with remissions at one time and aggravations at another, but never without a gracious succour duly proportioned to our need, we must expect to undergo. We are particularly premonished, that, previous to the commencement of that happy state of internal purity and external peace which is promised to the church on earth in the latter ages, a season of trial will fall upon his chosen servants, brief we hope in its duration, but severe far beyond any thing that hath been yet endured; and they must have given little attention to the prophetic word who discern not in the features of the present times awful signs of its approach.

The whole of Europe, with the exception of France only, and those miserable countries which France has fraternized, is yet nominally Christian: but, for the last thirty years, or more, we have seen in every part of it but little correspondence between the lives of men and their professions—a general indifference about the doctrines of Christianity—a general neglect of its duties—no reverent observance of its rites. The centre from

which the mischief hath spread is France. In that kingdom, the mystery of iniquity began to work, somewhat earlier than the middle of the century which has just passed away. Its machinations at first were secret, unperceived, disguised. Its instruments were persons in no conspicuous stations. But by the persevering zeal of an individual, who, by an affectation of a depth of universal learning which he never possessed — by audacity in the circulation of what he knew to be falsified history — by a counterfeit zeal for toleration — but, above all, by a certain brilliancy of unprincipled wit — contrived to acquire a celebrity for his name and a deference to his opinions far beyond the proportion of what might be justly due either to his talents or his attainments (though neither the one nor the other were inconsiderable), — by the persevering zeal, I say, of this miscreant, throughout a long, though an infirm and sickly life of bold active impiety, a conspiracy was formed of all the wit, the science, the philosophy, and the politics, not of France only, but of many other countries, for the extirpation of the Christian name. The art, the industry, the disguise, the deep-laid policy with which the nefarious

plot was carried on, — the numbers of all ranks and descriptions which were drawn in to take part in it — men of letters first; then magistrates, nobles, ministers of state, sovereign princes; last of all, the inferior ranks, merchants, attornies, bankers' clerks, tradesmen, mechanics, peasants, — the eagerness with which, under the direction of their chief, all these contributed their power, their influence, their ingenuity, their industry, their labour, in their respective situations and occupations in life, to the advancement of the one great object of the confederacy, are facts that are indeed astonishing. In this confederacy, the men of science and letters certainly played the principal part; and with so much earnestness they played it, that for many years nothing was done in France for the improvement of science without a view to the disservice of religion. To this purpose every discovery was bent, every advancement in learning was applied. When they pretended to embrace the Newtonian physics, they in earnest embraced nothing but certain abstract mathematical propositions. They caught up the terms, indeed, of gravitation and attraction, but they slily mistook the meaning; they applied them in senses in which

Newton never used them, and which he had repeatedly and explicitly disowned; they employed these terms as names of certain original active powers in matter by which the motions of the universe might be carried on, without any superintendence of an intelligent mind; they always spoke of such powers as the basis of the Newtonian philosophy; and by this artful perversion of Newton's language, they thought to procure a general credit and reputation for their vain and wicked system of materialism, as if it were founded on the immovable rock of Newton's mathematical demonstrations. When they embraced the metaphysics of the sage Locke, as they ever affect to call him, it was to apply them to a purpose to which the sage Locke himself, it must be owned, never perceived that they were applicable. More sagacious, perhaps, in this than their master, they saw, that upon his principles, once admitted, it would be easy to build a theory of mind which would make the immaterial principle as unnecessary in the microcosm of man, as it was, according to their distorted Newtonianism, in the universe; reducing all the phenomena of sensation, thought, reason, intellect, to a mere system of vibrations.

From the middle of the century to the period of the French Revolution, every great literary undertaking in that kingdom, every considerable publication upon whatever subject — natural philosophy, natural history, chemistry, anatomy, morals, law, and politics, was in some way or other brought to bear, directly or indirectly, upon the great object of the conspiracy — the defamation and discredit of the Christian religion. This was seldom indeed the immediate and avowed object: but it was a sort of under-plot, if the expression may be allowed, in every piece, to which what appeared to be the main action was in truth subservient. The stratagem was in this part the more certain of success, and of a wide and permanent effect, because many of the works which had this tendency were performances of great merit in their avowed subjects, and for a long time will be standard books among those who apply themselves to the sciences of which they treat. Thus they convey the poison in the most unsuspicious form; they have scattered it wide over the civilized world; and they will transmit it to remote ages.

Of many instances which I might produce in proof of this assertion, I shall select only two, —

the one, a work universally known and read; the other, from the abstruseness of the subject, read only by scholars of a particular class, for by such only it can be read, and known, perhaps, to no other; yet both works, in a scientific light, of a very superior cast. The one is the famous "Encyclopédie." This was undertaken by a knot of atheists, at the suggestion of the leader of the band, as a work which would prove highly conducive to the success of their plot, by the opportunities it would afford them, in the way in which it was proposed to them to manage it — in which, indeed, they have managed it, of disseminating their own principles; of bringing darkness, doubt, and uncertainty, upon the first principles of religion and morals; and of perplexing the inquisitive mind with the subtilty of dismembered disquisition upon abstruse metaphysical questions, — disquisition not given altogether, but broken into parts, and scattered, as it were, in fragments through the work; care being taken that what seems proved in one article shall seem to be confuted under another; while the reader is studiously referred from the one to the other of these contradictory articles, that if he is a studious inquirer after truth he may

derive nothing from the most diligent consultation of these omniscient volumes, but the torment of doubt, mistrust, and universal scepticism. Floundering in that muddy ocean for a certain length of time, it will be well with him indeed if its troubled waters float him not at last, when his strength is spent, to the dreary shores of atheism; for if a man who has once believed in God can but be brought to waver and doubt in that belief, the end will generally be that there will be no God for him. To bring mankind in general slily and unawares to this state, was the object of the "Encyclopédie."

The other instance I would mention of science pressed into the cause of irreligion, is a work of the Marquis de Condorcet, — a profound mathematician, but a most hardened atheist, and, as atheists always are, an enemy to all moral order. This wretch, a few years before the French Revolution, composed a work of deep erudition in the doctrine of chances; in which problems of great curiosity and great difficulty were successfully discussed: but the book, besides its visible scientific purport, had a latent moral object; and this was, to insinuate an opinion that there is no such thing as certainty, consequently, no such thing as truth, — that veri-

similitude or probability is the utmost to which we can attain, — and that the only standard of verisimilitude is a majority of suffrages; for this problem was the professed subject of the book, "To estimate the probability of right decision by the majority of votes in popular assemblies."

While these machinations were going on in France, attempts of another kind towards the same end were made in other parts of Europe by the emissaries and correspondents of the French conspirators; and particularly by a set of men, most of them of very inferior rank, but excelling the French atheists in ancient literature, and, if possible, in wicked policy. I speak of the Illuminés of Bavaria, — a society so formed as to extend its ramifications from the centre of Germany to the most distant shores of Europe, and, I fear, into the islands; and yet in all its parts to be under the absolute direction of one head, and to be put in motion in such manner and by such means, that the great majority in number of this wonderful conspiracy should never know the real object of their association, nor, when their energies were called forth, to what end they were really employed. It was a machine of stupendous size

and endless complications, instantaneously set at work at any time in all its parts, by touching a central spring, without any consciousness in itself of its own powers, and without any knowledge of the effects actually produced.

The success of this vast enterprise of impiety was beyond any thing that could have been expected by any but the first projector, from the littleness of its beginnings. "You have a hard task upon your hands," said a worthy French magistrate to Voltaire, just returned to his own country from England, in the year 1730. "Whatever you may write,"—he was then beginning to be known as a scribbler on the side of infidelity,—"you will never carry your point of demolishing the Christian religion."—"Nous verrons," replied the crafty villain: "We shall see." And the astonished world *hath seen!* We have seen an open apostasy of one of the most distinguished nations of Christendom—one the most distinguished as a Christian nation; and in her apostasy, many circumstances are open to observation, which give too much ground to fear that it is but the beginning of that from which the great Antichrist is to arise. The democracy of apostate France seems, indeed,

in many particulars, to be doing the work of Antichrist before he comes, and preparing his way before him. The new government had no sooner renounced the faith, than they proceeded to a malignant persecution of it; and they used their utmost endeavours to excite similar persecutions and an equal hatred of the clergy in other countries. We have seen them anticipating the work of Daniel's wilful king, by remarkably changing times and laws. They gave their calendar a form entirely new, on purpose to obliterate the memory of the festivals of the church. They openly renounce the first principles of morality; and they "use no discretion in the pleasures of women;" dishonouring, not merely by the gallantries of private life, but even by their laws, the holy institution of marriage. The more effectually to wean men from Christianity, they have introduced something like the old Pagan idolatry—much of the pomp and lasciviousness of its rites. In their constitution, they affect to imitate the form of the old Roman republic; restoring the powers and the titles of the principal magistrates in the different departments. The countries against which their arms have been turned, either in the West or in

the East, have been principally those which formed the body of the Roman empire. Insomuch, that in this odious French republic, aping the manners, grasping the dominion, speaking to friends and to enemies the high vaunting language of ancient Rome, we seem to behold the dreadful Apocalyptic Beast, which, at the time of the desolation of the Pagan Whore exhibited in vision to St. John, had been, but was not, but was to be again, — we seem, I say, to behold, in the French republic, this dreadful monster beginning to rise in its ancient form out of the raging sea of anarchy and irreligion.

The time will not permit me to proceed in this detail: indeed, I have entered upon it only from a desire of impressing as strongly upon your minds as it is impressed upon my own, the magnitude of the danger which threatens all Christendom, and the assiduity which the dreadful crisis requires of you in watching over the souls committed to your care. The frenzy which has seized the French is of that nature, that it must be expected to spread wherever it is not encountered by the most determined energies of government, and by a great strength of sound religious principle in private

life. All will be lost (for a season at least) where the government is patient and passive; or, which is more immediately your concern, my reverend brethren, where individuals are lukewarm, and, most of all, where the ministers of the Gospel are remiss and negligent. Upon this I have much to say; but I must premise some farther observations upon what has befallen the Gallican church, which I conceive to be of great importance, as involving matter of very general concern, and such as will give some degree of weight, I hope, to the advice I mean to offer.

First, then, I observe, that the apostasy of the French nation, and the subversion of the Gallican church, however unexpected at the time in Europe, was not a sudden event: it was not one of those spontaneous revolutions in public opinion which are to be traced to no definite beginning, to no certain cause: it was not the effect of any real grievance of the people, proceeding, as hath been falsely pretended, from the rapacity and the ambition of their clergy: it was the catastrophe and accomplishment of a premeditated plot, — a plot conceived in mere malice, carried on with steady unrelenting malignity for half a century, — a plot

in which the crooked policy of infatuated statesmen, the wheedling arts of intriguing women, the authority of sceptred pedants, allured by the paltry pride of literary fame to league with traitors for the subversion of the thrones on which they sat,— a plot in which all these conspired to abet and aid the chimerical project, as it might at first seem, of a few lettered infidels.

The history of this plot has been given in detail, and the proofs laid before the public, by two writers, who, without any concert or communication, have, with great ability and unwearied industry, and with particular opportunities of information, engaged in the detection of these works of darkness. I speak of the Abbé Barruel and Professor Robison. Their separate narratives, the result, as I have said, of separate inquiry, have all that agreement in the essential parts which is the infallible character of truth. It is not to be wondered that the Jacobins should be anxious to sink the credit of these valuable works, the records of the infamy of their party; and for that purpose, should have endeavoured to make the most of minute mistakes, not at all affecting the sum of the evidence, which in inquiries of such length

and detail are almost unavoidable. But there are few histories supported in all material points by such a mass of authentic document as the consentient narratives of Barruel and Robison *; and if any one can withhold his belief, when he has perused their memoirs with attention, I scruple not to pronounce, that if his judgment is not biassed by strange partialities, he is one who knows not how to appreciate the value and amount of historical evidence.

A second remark I have to make upon the French business is, that the apology which is sometimes attempted for the French atheists, and may pass too easily upon persons of superficial inform-

* In this opinion of the works of Barruel and Robison, I am happy to have the concurrence of a reverend prelate, whose extensive erudition and comprehensive knowledge of the present state of Europe entitle his judgment upon such points to the greatest deference. "The conclusion," he says of the historical investigations of these two writers, "remains established by the most incontrovertible proofs, — by the records of societies engaged in this diabolical purpose; by the letters of the chief conspirators themselves; by the writings of others, who either openly avowed their design or inadvertently betrayed it in the heat of contention; and by the actual state of religion in those countries in which their emissaries have been most active and successful." — *See the Bishop of Lincoln's late Charge*, p. 9.

ation and weak discernment, — that their enmity against the religion of their country was excited by a just abhorrence of the corruptions of the Church of Rome; that they were no enemies to the Gospel in its purity, and have even rendered service to true religion, by their successful opposition, as I have heard it said, to intolerance and superstition, — is a most unfounded false assertion. The real object of the settled aversion of the atheistical conspiracy was nothing that is erroneous and exceptionable in Popery: It was every thing that is good, amiable, and holy in Christianity. They railed, it is true, at superstition: But religion and superstition in their phraseology were synonymes; and religion was the real object of their abuse. They talked in raptures of universal toleration: But what they meant by the word, as appears by their confidential explanations to one another, was neither more nor less than the sacrilegious project of seizing upon all property set apart for the maintenance of any established church of any form or of any religious institution. Had the twelve apostles been living upon earth, and preaching the Gospel in France, in the times of Voltaire, D'Alembert, and Diderot, — the

twelve apostles, as they would have exceeded all other clergy in the energy of their preaching and the sanctity of their lives, would have incurred more than any other clergy the reproach and insult of those children of hell.

The proofs of this heavy accusation are easily to be drawn from the principles avowed in their publications, from the sentiments expressed in their familiar epistles, and from every step in their conduct. What are the opprobrious names which Voltaire bestows upon Christ himself*, and upon the holy Apostles?† — Such, my brethren, as I cannot repeat, nor could you hear without horror. What are the maxims which we find in the works of his favourite disciples? — "The Universal Cause," says one, "that God of the philosophers, the Jews, and the Christians, is nothing more than a chimera and a phantom." "The wonders of nature," says another, "far from proclaiming a God, are but the necessary effects of matter prodigiously diversified." "There are no means of knowing," says a third, "whether there be or be not a God, — no means of knowing whether there

* L'Infame.

† Douze Faquins.

be any difference between good and evil." "The immortality of the soul," says a fourth, "is a dogma of barbarians, gloomy, disheartening, and contrary to all legislation." "Virtue and probity," says a fifth, "in private life, is but the habit of actions personally useful: Personal interest is the only and universal criterion of the merit of human actions." "Modesty in the female sex," says the same grave moralist, "is but an invention of refined voluptuousness; and morals have nothing to fear from the generous passion of love. Filial piety is more an affair of education than of nature; and the laws which enjoin the perpetual cohabitation of man and wife are barbarous and cruel."

Now, I ask upon what principle is this abuse of the Son of God — these daring disputations against the very being of a God — these attempts to obliterate the distinctions of right and wrong, to confound the fair with the useful, and to reconcile men to all manner of immorality, — how are such language and such maxims to be reconciled with that reverence for the substance of pure Christianity which is ascribed to this flagitious junto by their apologists, when they gravely tell us, that

the quarrel was with the abuses of religion, not with religion itself — at most but with Popery, not with Christianity in the form in which it appears in the Protestant Churches of England, Sweden, Germany, and Geneva? How is it then that these friends of the Reformed Churches could find no better name for the faith of the Genevois but that of "the fooleries of John Calvin?"* How is it that they never speak of Luther, but — in contradiction to the truth of history, and to the evidence of the man's own writings, in which though dead he yet speaketh — as a dull stupid fellow, given up to wine and women? Whence was Voltaire's exultation in the prospect of the fall of the Church of England, upon which he feasted his imagination, as the inevitable consequence of the truths, he calls them, propagated in this island by the pen of his brother-blasphemer Hume? Was all this from pure love of the Reformation? And was the offence taken at the worship of the Blessed Virgin in the Church of Rome the motive, with the democracy of apostate France, to dress up a strumpet in the emblems of the Goddess of

* "Les sottises de Jean Chauvin."

Liberty, and under that title to pay divine honours to that living idol of their own creation? Was it abhorrence of idolatry that induced them to revive the Pagan rites in the dedication of altars to Liberty and Reason, and in the ceremonies by which they honour the memory of their dead, while they consign their bodies to eternal sleep? If these things are too absurd to be believed, the inevitable conclusion must be, that pure genuine Christianity is what the impious confederacy would obliterate; —which carries us on to this farther conclusion, that they will attack it in every shape and in every place; and for this purpose, indeed, they have their emissaries in every quarter.

The mode of the attack will, however, be different in different places, according to the varieties of national temper they will have to encounter. And this observation brings me home at last to my own country, and to you, my reverend brethren.

In this country, I believe, they know very well that bold undisguised atheism, proceeding directly and openly to its horrid purpose, will never be successful. They must have recourse, therefore, to cautious stratagem; they must pretend that

their object is not to demolish but reform: And it was with a view of giving colour to this pretence, that the impudent lie — for such I have proved it to be — has been propagated in this country, of their reverence for pure Christianity and for the Reformation. In their first attempts in this way, we trust, they have been completely foiled. The laity of this country — the great majority I mean — have no better relish for the Socinian heresy than for plain atheism; they think much alike of him who openly disowns the Son of God and of him who denies the Father: Insomuch, that the advocates of that blasphemy have preached themselves out of all credit with the people: The patriarch of the sect is fled; and the orators and oracles of Birmingham and Essex Street are dumb, — or if they speak, speak only to be disregarded.

Still the operations of the enemy are going on, — still going on by stratagem, — the stratagem still a pretence of reformation, — but the reformation the very reverse of what was before attempted. Instead of divesting religion of its mysteries, and reducing it to a mere philosophy in speculation, and to a mere morality in practice, the plan is now to affect a great

zeal for orthodoxy, — to make great pretensions to an extraordinary measure of the Holy Spirit's influence, — to alienate the minds of the people from the Established Clergy, by representing them as sordid worldlings, without any concern about the souls of men, indifferent to the religion which they ought to teach, and to which the laity are attached, and destitute of the Spirit of God. In many parts of the kingdom, new conventicles have been opened in great number, and congregations formed of one knows not what denomination. The pastor is often, in appearance at least, an illiterate peasant or mechanic. The congregation is visited occasionally by preachers from a distance. Sunday-schools are opened in connection with these conventicles. There is much reason to suspect, that the expenses of these schools and conventicles are defrayed by associations formed in different places; for the preachers and schoolmasters are observed to engage in expenses, for the support and advancement of their institutions, to which, if we may judge from appearance, their own means must be altogether inadequate. The poor are even bribed, by small pecuniary gifts from time to time, to send their children to

these schools of they know not what, rather than to those connected with the Established Church, in which they would be bred in the principles of true religion and loyalty. It is very remarkable, that these new congregations of non-descripts have been mostly formed since the Jacobins have been laid under the restraint of those two most salutary statutes commonly known by the names of the Sedition and the Treason Bill; a circumstance which gives much ground for suspicion, that sedition and atheism are the real objects of these institutions, rather than religion. Indeed, in some places this is known to be the case. In one topic the teachers of all these congregations agree, — abuse of the Established Clergy, as negligent of their flocks, cold in their preaching, and destitute of the Spirit. In this they are joined by persons of a very different cast; whom a candour, of which they on their part set but a poor example, is unwilling to suspect of any ill design, though it is difficult to acquit them of the imputation of an indiscretion in their zeal, which, in its consequences, may be productive of mischief, very remote, I believe, from their intentions. It is a dreadful aggravation of the dangers of the present

crisis in this country, that persons of real piety should, without knowing it, be lending their aid to the common enemy, and making themselves in effect accomplices in a conspiracy against the Lord and against his Christ. The Jacobins of this country, I very much fear, are at this moment making a tool of Methodism, just as the Illuminés of Bavaria made a tool of Freemasonry; while the real Methodist, like the real Freemason, is kept in utter ignorance of the wicked enterprise the counterfeit has in hand.

What measures it may become the wisdom of the Legislature to adopt to stop the progress of this growing evil, is a point upon which I shall not touch in this assembly. The question, my brethren, for your consideration, is what assistance the Church of God has a right to expect from you. Much she has a right to expect; for much may be done by you in your proper character (a character of great public utility, and of high dignity when it is well sustained,) of parish-priests. Upon this I mean to offer my advice; and if I have succeeded in the attempt to impress upon your minds a sense of the present danger, you will take in good part the word of exhortation.

I might deliver all that I wish to say with great brevity, if I were to address every one of you in the words of St. Paul to Timothy: "Meditate upon these things,"—the things of which the apostle had discoursed, the corruptions of false teachers in the latter ages, the very things of which we have been now discoursing, and the truths of Christianity as opposed to them: "Meditate upon these things. Take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine. Continue in them; for in doing this, thou shalt save thyself and them that hear thee." * But it may be not unprofitable to open the particulars of this comprehensive admonition; as the conduct it enjoins will ever be the most effectual opposition which the holy ministry can make to the attacks of their enemies, open or disguised.

The first part of the injunction, "Take heed unto thyself," is fulfilled in the fundamental part by those who never suffer themselves to lose sight of the great work to which the Holy Ghost has called them, and who devote the far greater proportion of their leisure hours to useful study and devout meditation. By the leisure hours of a clergyman,

* 1 Timothy, iv. 15, 16.

I understand all that portion of his time which is not taken up with his public functions. I am not at all aware that it is the duty of a clergyman to assume such an austerity of character as would entirely exclude him from general society: A different conduct seems to be recommended by the example of our Lord; who, while he went about doing good, refused not to eat with publicans and sinners: I rather think that the duty of a clergyman cannot be performed without something of a familiarity with his flock in particular, and with the world in general: Nevertheless, it is always dangerous to religion when the manners of the clergy become too much secularised. This will always lower the order in the eyes of the people, and lessen their general reverence for the offices of religion. This, however, will not happen when the private hours of the clergy, the younger clergy in particular, are devoted, as they ought to be, to useful studies. The studious clergyman will not be shy of being seen in public: he will freely come abroad for recreation; he will make himself agreeable in the company with which it becomes him to associate; and will not scruple to take a part in their amusements: But he will neither

have leisure nor inclination to run the eternal round of giddy pleasure, as if diversion were the business of his life, and his professional business only his diversion. On the contrary, a mind habitually intent upon the gravest subjects, and a thirst for the highest knowledge, will discover itself in the dignified sobriety even of his relaxations; which will impress his familiar friends and companions with respect, and the profane with awe; while the latter, however they may delight in the company, and pretend to applaud what they call the free and easy manners, will in their hearts despise, and not seldom to his face make a jest of, the jovial gay Anacreon, in the formalities of a gown and cassock.

The admonition of "taking heed to yourselves" relates not, however, solely to your private pursuits, or to the manner of your ordinary conversation with the world at large: It extends also to your deportment in your intercourse with your parishioners individually, in your spiritual capacity; which ought to be such as to manifest a real conscientious concern for their everlasting interests. This will best be done by a cheerful unwearied assiduity in the charitable office of visiting

the dying and the sick; and by taking advantage of the opportunities which those seasons of affliction afford, of administering wholesome advice, not only to the sick themselves, but to their friends and relations. Upon these occasions, you will not think it enough to repeat the prayers at the bedside which the Church has provided, but you will make inquiry into the actual state of the sick person's soul; that you may administer such advice or consolation as his case may demand, and give him all the assistance your external ministry can give in making his peace with God. Nothing will so much attach your parishioners to you, in preference to all intruders, as a conscientious attendance upon this duty. You must not excuse yourselves from the trouble of it, upon a pretence that religion being a business to be attended to in health, your utmost services will come too late upon the deathbed to be of any real benefit. You are not so little acquainted with human nature, my reverend brethren, as not to know, that even the most religious persons are apt, when death approaches, to feel alarms and disquietudes, which the word of consolation delivered by God's appointed messengers may compose and relieve. But taking

the worst case — the case of one who has led a very sinful life: To delay repentance to the last, is certainly most dangerous; and men cannot be too earnestly warned of the danger: but yet I cannot think we are warranted to say, that repentance is never wrought upon a death-bed; I am confident we are warranted to say, that at whatever period repentance is wrought, the soul is saved: It is our duty, therefore, to do all we can, — to persuade an early but to assist and encourage even a late repentance; to set forth to the terrified soul the merit of Christ's blood; to hold up to the eye of faith the crucified Redeemer; to join our prayers to the sinner's tears; and in the very worst cases, to cry aloud to Him that is mighty to save. Remember, brethren, that "God was in Christ reconciling sinners to himself; and that he hath committed to us the word and ministry of reconciliation."

The care of the youth of your parish is another matter that falls, in part at least, under this injunction of "taking heed to yourselves." Public catechising, indeed, belongs rather to the head of doctrine; but there is a duty that you owe to the children of the poorer class, the due discharge of

which is much for your own interest and your own credit,—the duty, I mean, of providing, as far as in you lieth, for their godly education. For this purpose I would advise, that you should, by all means in your power, promote the establishment of Sunday-schools in your respective parishes, and take the trouble to superintend the management of them.

A report has been circulated, by a misrepresentation, I suppose, in the public prints, that in a debate in the House of Peers, in which I had a considerable share, just at the close of the last session of Parliament, I spoke with decided disapprobation of all these institutions. The report is false: I spoke of them upon that occasion, as I always have spoken, and always shall speak, as institutions that may be very beneficial or very pernicious, according as they are well or ill conducted, and according as they are placed in proper or improper hands. I said, that "schools of Jacobinical religion and Jacobinical politics—that is to say, schools of atheism and disloyalty—abound in this country; schools, in the shape and disguise of charity-schools and Sunday-schools, in which the minds of the children of the very lowest orders are

enlightened — that is to say, taught to despise religion and the laws, and all subordination." This I know to be the fact. But the proper antidote for the poison of the Jacobinical schools, will be schools for the children of the same class under the management of the parochial clergy. Sunday-schools, therefore, under your own inspection, I would advise you to encourage. But you must keep a vigilant eye over them. Leave nothing to the discretion of a master or a mistress: Suffer no books to be introduced but such as have had your previous approbation; and in the choice of expositions of the Church Catechism, which are almost the only books requisite in such schools, besides Psalters, Prayer-books, Testaments, and Bibles, — you would do well to fix on some of those which you will find upon the lists of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge; upon which you will be sure to find none that are in any way exceptionable.

Much of your conduct in the exercise of your public functions, where it is not positively ruled by the Rubric or the Canons, or where a relaxation of discipline leaves more, perhaps, than ought to be so left to the conscience and discretion

of the individual, will come under the rule of "taking heed unto yourselves." It is not only incumbent upon you to perform the public offices with due solemnity, and with fervour of devotion, but the performance should not be in scanty measure, as a toil to which the labourer reluctantly submits. Take care how you give the laity reason to suspect that you desire to make the most of your livings, and to do as little for it as you can. Nothing hath so much hurt the general interests of religion, or the Established Church, as the lazy practice, which of late years has gained ground in country parishes, of opening the church for divine service on one part only of the Lord's-day. The sectaries take great advantage of this; and, what is much worse, the Devil also takes advantage of it. On that half of the day on which there is no admission at the parish-church, good inclinations carry the more pious part of your parishioners to the conventicle; and the Devil invites those of another cast to the alehouse.

My reverend brethren, these are plain hints; I beseech you to give them due consideration. I have good hope they may produce an effect which may prevent the necessity of those exertions of

authority, which, if hints prove insufficient, must be used for the remedy of this crying sin and scandal.

The festivals and fasts of the church are, I fear not without some connivance of the clergy, gone much into oblivion and neglect. There can be no excuse for the neglect of the feast of our Lord's Nativity, and the stated fasts of Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, even in the smallest country parishes; but in towns, and the more populous villages, the church ought certainly to be opened for worship on the forenoon, at least, of every day in the Passion-week, of the Mondays and Tuesdays in the weeks of Easter and Whitsuntide, on the Epiphany, and on some, if not all, of the other festivals.

Besides the restoration of the canonical service of the church twice every Lord's-day, and once at least on many of the festivals, I very much wish a more frequent celebration than I find in many places of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Four celebrations in the year are the very fewest that ought to be allowed in the very smallest parishes: it were to be wished that it were in all more frequent: I am confident that the oftener

it is administered, the more numerous the communicants will be. But the frequency of the celebration will be of little use, unless your people are well instructed in the nature and use of this most holy and mysterious ordinance. If they are suffered to consider it as nothing more than a rite of simple commemoration of Christ's death — a mere external form of thanksgiving on the part of the receiver, — they will never come to it with due reverence. You will instruct them, therefore, in the true nature of a sacrament, — that the sacraments are not only signs of grace, but means of the grace signified; the matter of the sacrament being, by Christ's appointment and the operation of the Holy Spirit, the vehicle of grace to the believer's soul. The Lord's Supper is in this sense a sacrament in the very highest import of the word; for you will remember, that the Church of England, although she rejects the doctrine of a literal transubstantiation of the elements, which is taught in the Church of Rome, denies not, but explicitly maintains, that "the body and blood of Christ are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper," — though they are taken. "after a spiritual manner;" and "the

mean by which they are received is faith." It is with much satisfaction that I recommend to your perusal a work not long since published upon this sublime subject, by a learned divine of this diocese, under the title of "Considerations on the Nature and Efficacy of the Lord's Supper." I have requested the reverend author to reduce it to a form and size fit for general dispersion among the laity, which I mean to recommend. Meanwhile it highly deserves the attention of the profession; to whose particular use it is, perhaps, better adapted in its present shape than in one more popular; and it is no inconsiderable monument of the learning and piety of the writer.

Our meditations have insensibly, I think, made a transition from the topic of "take heed unto thyself," to the topic of "take heed unto the doctrine." The terms of this admonition are very remarkable, — "Take heed unto *the* doctrine," not "unto *thy* doctrine;" although, by a typographical error, we read "thy" in many copies of our English Bible.* "Take heed unto *the* (not *thy*)

* The oldest edition, among those which I have inspected, in which this *erratum* appears, is the magnificent folio of Buck and Daniel, printed at Cambridge in the year 1638. The text

doctrine;" as if the apostle studiously avoided a form of expression which might seem to imply that

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is correctly given, "the," not "thy," in the black letter folio of 1611, in the Roman letter quarto of 1612, and in the black letter folio of 1617;—all from the excellent press of Robert Barker. The first of these three is the *editio princeps* of the English Bible now in use; and the second was the first impression in quarto. From the year 1638 to the middle of the past century, editors seem to have fluctuated between the true and corrupt reading, without giving themselves the trouble to consult either the original Greek or the first editions of King James's English text; and the error prevailed, as appears from the annexed collation,—which shows the reading, the year, the printer's name, size, and place, of many editions in that interval.

THE	THY
	1638. Buck and Daniel. Folio. Cambridge.
1648. Daniel. 12mo. Cambridge.	
	1657. Field. 8vo. Cambridge.
1658. Field. 24mo. London.	
	1660. Field. Folio. Cambridge.
	1660. Hill and Field. 8vo. London.
	1663. Field. 4to. Cambridge.
	1666. Field. 4to. Cambridge.
	1679. The Theatre. 4to. Oxford.

even St. Timothy had any doctrine to deliver of his own. He is enjoined to take heed to *the doctrine*—*i. e.* to the doctrine delivered by the inspired apostles, and by the authority of the church committed to St. Timothy. And this, my brethren,

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THE	THY
	1701. ——— Folio. London.
	1722. ——— Folio. Edinburgh.
1756. Thomas Baskett. 4to. Oxford.	
	1762. Bentham. 4to. Cambridge.
	1767. Mark Baskett. 12mo. London.

Since the year 1756, the true reading seems to have maintained its ground in the Oxford and the best of the London Bibles. Whether Thomas Baskett, in 1756, was the restorer of the text, I cannot tell, not having examined the whole series from 1638 downwards: but after 1756, I find the text correctly given in all the Oxford Bibles that I have examined (except a small octavo of Wright and Gill in 1776); particularly in the folio of Wright and Gill in 1770, the folio of the Clarendon Press in 1781, the quarto of Wright and Gill in 1777, a duodecimo of the Clarendon Press in 1782, an octavo of the Clarendon Press in 1788. I find the text correct also in the London folio of Eyre and Strahan in 1772, and in the octavo of the same printers without date of the year.

must be your rule:—You have no authority to preach any new-fangled opinions of your own, or to adopt those of any uninspired self-commissioned teachers; you must stick close to *the doctrine*, to the form of sound words originally delivered to the saints; you are to lay open the wonderful scheme of man's redemption; you are to lay it open in its entireness; you are to set it forth faithfully and exactly, as it is exhibited in the holy Scriptures, — and, upon the authority of the Scriptures, in their plain, natural, unsophisticated meaning, in the Offices, the Thirty-nine Articles, and the Homilies of the Church of England. This doctrine will always find its way to the hearts of those that shall be saved, and bear down all opposition internal or external of the carnal man. But if, instead of thus preaching Christ, you are content to preach only Socrates or Seneca, — if, instead of the everlasting gospel of the living God, you preach some extract only of your own, accommodated, by a bold retrenchment of mysteries, to the blindness and the pride of human reason, — depend upon it, animated enthusiasm will be an overmatch for dry frigid ethics; superstition will be an overmatch for all such mutilated gospels;

and crafty atheism, taking advantage of the extravagance of the first, the insipidity of the second, the enormities of the third, and of the rash concessions of half-believers, will make an easy conquest of them all. In delivering the great mysterious truths of the gospel, — and I repeat it, the whole gospel, with all its mysteries, must be preached in all congregations, — I would advise you to use in general not an argumentative, but a plain didactic style. "Teach with authority, not as the Scribes:" upon the momentous doctrines of man's corruption —of Christ's atonement—the gratuitous acceptance of man's imperfect works in regard to Christ's merits — of the justification of man — of good works, —always adhering strictly, as I have before said, to the Scriptures, the Thirty-nine Articles, and the Homilies. I would entreat you of all things to avoid controversial argument in the pulpit upon what are called the Calvinistic points, — the dark subject of predestination and election, I mean, and the subordinate questions. Differences of opinion upon these subjects have subsisted among the best Christians from the beginning; and will subsist, I am persuaded, to the end. They seem to me to arise almost of necessity from the

inability of the human mind to reconcile the doctrine of a Providence irresistibly ruling all events, with the responsibility of man as a moral agent; and persons equally zealous for God's glory have taken different sides of the question, according as their minds have been more forcibly impressed with awful notions of God's right of sovereignty on the one hand, or of his justice on the other. But in certain leading principles, Lutherans, Calvinists, Arminians, and we of the Church of England, are all, I trust, agreed. We are agreed in the fundamental doctrine of the Trinity; all believing in the united operation of the Three Persons in their distinct offices in the accomplishment of man's redemption: we are all agreed that the foreknowledge of God is, like himself, from all eternity and absolute; that his providence is universal, controlling not only all the motions of matter, but all the thoughts and actions of intelligent beings of all orders; that, nevertheless, man has that degree of free-agency which makes him justly responsible; that his sins certainly are his own; and that "without holiness no man shall see God." While we agree in these principles, I cannot see to what purpose we agitate endless disputes upon dark (I

had almost said presumptuous) questions, about the order of the Divine decrees (as if there could be any order of time in the eternal energies of the Divine mind), and about the manner of the communion between the Spirit of God and the soul of the believer.

When, by assiduity in your public and private ministry — by the purity of your lives and the soundness of your doctrine — you have gained the good-will and esteem of your parishioners, they will be ready to give you their attention upon a subject upon which the people of this country in general much want good teaching, — I mean the nature of the church, the necessity of church communion, and the danger of schism. Upon these points, I know nothing so well calculated for general edification as a tract entitled "An Essay on the Church," by the late Reverend William Jones, sometime of Pluckley in this county, but last of Nayland in Suffolk. It has lately been republished, in a small size and at a cheap rate, by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge; of which the author had been many years a most useful member. Of that faithful servant of God, I can speak, both from personal knowledge and from

his writings. He was a man of quick penetration, of extensive learning, and the soundest piety; and he had, beyond any other man I ever knew, the talent of writing upon the deepest subjects to the plainest understandings. He is gone to his rest; and his works, we trust, follow him. His "Catholic Doctrine of the Trinity," and this "Essay on the Church," cannot have too wide a circulation.

When you find occasion — which should be often — to preach, or to write, or to talk, upon this duty of living in the communion of the church, never make it an occasion of bringing up the controversy, which is always better avoided, upon points of doctrine with the Calvinists; except so far as to show that a difference of opinion upon what are called the Calvinistic points is no sort of reason for a separation of communions. I confess, I cannot understand upon what principle our brethren of the Calvinistic persuasion should demand of us, that we should adopt either the Resolutions of the Synod of Dort, or what are called the Lambeth Articles, as the necessary exposition of the Articles of our Church; but I as little understand upon what principle our Arminian brethren should insist that we should set forth their opinions,

as if they were asserted in our Articles, in their true and plain meaning, in condemnation of the Calvinistic. I know not what hinders but that the highest Supralapsarian Calvinist may be as good a churchman as an Arminian; and if the Church of England in her moderation opens her arms to both, neither can with a very good grace desire that the other should be excluded. This I know, that the points of doctrine in dispute between the Arminians and the Calvinists have so little to do with the points of discipline in dispute between churchmen and schismatics, that the opinions of St. Austin, which are the basis of Calvinism, have had their strenuous assertors in the Church of Rome itself; — indeed, for a long time they were the prevailing opinions of the Latin Church. Among us, Archbishop Laud was an Arminian; as since his time many other good servants of God, bright ornaments and luminaries of our Church, have been. But if we would look for warm advocates of church-authority in general, and for able writers in defence of our own form of church-government in particular, such we shall find among those divines of our Church who were called in their day the Doctrinal Calvinists.

I must, however, declare, that when I speak of Calvinism and Arminianism as capable of uniting in one communion, and that one the communion of the Church of England, I look only to Calvinism such as the venerable Calvin would himself have owned, not enriched and embellished with the extravagancies of later visionaries; and I look to Arminianism such as the pious Arminius would have owned, not fouled and tainted with loathsome admixtures of the Arian and Pelagian heresies.

My reverend brethren, my discourse with you has run to so great a length, that I must now somewhat abruptly close it. You may think it strange that I have not touched at all upon a duty which I hold indeed to be of the very first importance, — the residence of the beneficed clergy upon their livings. The truth is, that in all that I have said I have supposed your residence. I know not how to talk with a clergyman about any part of his duty, without assuming residence as a prerequisite; or without assuming, at least, that, in particular cases in which non-residence may be allowable, as in some it certainly is, the absent incumbent is represented in every part of his character by an

adequate substitute, without abatement of an iota of the full duty of the resident parochial priest. The hypothesis, I know, fails me in too many instances. If the high inexpediency of non-residence is not suggested to your own minds, by the detail I have set before you of the particulars of your duty, I know not by what words of mine I could hope to turn your attention to the subject. All that I shall attempt to say is this, — that it will be highly to the credit of the clergy, if the timely reformation of so serious an evil should appear to come from themselves, without any exercise of a compulsive authority, ecclesiastical or secular. The evil is grown to that gigantic size, that a remedy in one way or another can be at no great distance; and if persuasion prove ineffectual, or take not, indeed, a very speedy effect, other measures must be taken, and other remedies provided. But of that in another place.

THE

CHARGE

OF

SAMUEL, LORD BISHOP OF ST. ASAPH,

TO

THE CLERGY OF HIS DIOCESE;

DELIVERED AT HIS PRIMARY VISITATION, IN THE MONTH OF AUGUST, 1806.

MY REVEREND BRETHREN,

FROM the answers you have returned to the articles of inquiry addressed to you, though in many instances not so distinct and particular as I expected, (a circumstance which will occasion some trouble to the clergy themselves, and to me; for I shall think it my duty to repeat my inquiries in all cases where the questions have not been answered to my satisfaction,) yet from the information I have received from you, it gives me pleasure to

say, that I have reason to think well, upon the whole, of the state of my diocese with respect to the discharge of parochial duties. It affords but few instances (I wish I could say it afforded none; but it certainly affords but few) of culpable non-residence; and with respect to the public service of the church, I am willing to flatter myself, that it is less, in this than in many other parts of the kingdom, neglected or curtailed.

I must mention, however, one irregularity which prevails to a very great extent, and must be remedied. I speak of the great number of clergymen who are officiating as curates, in all parts of the diocese, without a licence. This is a very high offence against ecclesiastical discipline; the continuance of which, I think it necessary to declare, I shall not endure. Even a resident incumbent has no right to introduce any one to exercise the sacred functions in his parish, under the character of an assistant, without the authority of the bishop. It will open the door to the greatest enormities, if it be left to every incumbent to retain any assistant he thinks fit, without bringing him before the bishop to make the proper inquiry into the regularity of his orders, the godliness of his life and

conduct, and his ability to instruct the people; and to give him authority to exercise his ministry in the parish, if he appears to be qualified for it. But the enormity is much greater, when a non-resident incumbent abandons the whole of his duty — the care and government of the souls of his parishioners — to a person unapproved by the bishop, and unknown to him, not bound by any oath of canonical obedience, nor by any declaration of conformity to the liturgy of the united Church of England and Ireland, nor otherwise amenable to the ecclesiastical jurisdiction but for offences of that enormity for which he would be amenable to the secular tribunals. I think it my duty to apply myself immediately to the reformation of these flagrant abuses; and for that purpose, I require every person officiating as a curate in any part of my diocese, without farther notice or requisition than that which I now give, on or before the 1st day of the month of October next ensuing, to go before the rural dean of the district in which the parish or chapelry in which he serves is situated, and to exhibit to the said rural dean his letters of orders, a *testimonium*, signed by three clergymen, of his godly life and conversation, and his nomination to

the cure by the incumbent of the living. These particulars I expect the rural dean to report to me; and if I see reason to be satisfied with that report, I shall authorize the rural dean to receive the declarations, witness the subscriptions, and administer the oaths by law required to be made and taken, and in my name to license him to the cure. And if any person shall presume to officiate as a curate, in any part of my diocese, after the 1st of October, without having obtained my licence, or without having gone before the rural dean in order to obtain it, I shall institute a process in my court against every person so offending.

I am confident, my reverend brethren, that I shall meet with no unwillingness on your part to submit to so ancient and so essential a part of the discipline of the church; which, though ancient, is by no means obsolete, and is of the first importance to the interests of religion and the credit of the order. But if in any case a plea should be set up on the part of the curate, that the incumbent will not grant him a nomination in order to his being licensed, my remedy in the case of a resident incumbent will still be against the curate. That the incumbent refuses him a nomination, will be

no excuse in law for his officiating without a licence: He will only appear in court as a person acting in defiance both of the incumbent and of the bishop; doing that, without so much as the authority of a nomination, which, under the authority of a nomination, he could not legally do without a farther authority of a far superior kind. The fault, perhaps, in such a case may be in the incumbent; and he will suffer for it, if the assistance of a curate be necessary to him, as he will find that he must go without it; for I shall proceed against the curate till I compel him to desist from officiating.

In the case of a non-resident incumbent who should refuse to nominate a curate, the remedy would be much more simple and direct. In such a case, I should not hesitate to avail myself, to the utmost extent, of the large and summary authority with which I am invested by the 36th of the King, chap. 83., commonly known by the name of the Curates' Act; — by which I am impowered to nominate a curate for any non-resident incumbent who refuses to nominate a curate for himself; and to appoint to that curate such a stipend, within a certain limit, as, regard being had to the value of the living and the greatness of the cure, I may

think fit. This is what I can do, and will do, if the occasion for it should arise; but I am persuaded, the good sense and the orderly dispositions of the clergy over whom I have the happiness and honour to preside, will supersede the necessity of any such exertions of authority. With respect to the stipend, a stipend must be offered in the nomination, and assigned in the licence: a licence without a stipend assigned is a nullity. But between resident incumbents and their curates, I shall interfere but little in the matter of stipend; leaving them to settle the *quantum* of it by agreement between themselves. In the case of non-resident incumbents, it will be my duty to take care that the hire of the labourer is duly proportioned to his service: But in this case I shall interfere no farther than the interests of religion and the credit of the order may seem, in every particular case, to demand. And here again I cherish a confident hope, that the liberality of the beneficed clergy will leave little occasion for the interposition of my authority.

I am aware, that many of the beneficed clergy have entertained an apprehension that a curate once licensed is not easily removable, — that he is

so fastened upon the incumbent, that the incumbent has no longer the command over him; and this has given rise to the irregular practice of retaining unlicensed curates. And it is very true, that a licensed curate is not to be removed at the mere will and pleasure of the incumbent: An incumbent is not to dismiss his curate with as little ceremony as he might turn away his menial servant, at a month's warning or with a month's wages. Nor ought this to be: It would be a lowering of the order in the eyes of the laity, if a clergyman could be so dismissed; and this sort of mastership over him the incumbent ought not to hold, for the relation is not that of master and servant, but of fellow-labourers; and it is for the interest of the incumbent himself, — for whatever is for the dignity of the order is for the interest of every individual belonging to it, — it is for the interest of the incumbent to uphold the rank of the curate in the eyes of his parishioners, and to set him forth to them as his own equal — as, indeed, in clerical rank he is; for in the church, one priest is upon an even footing with another, whatever may be the disparity of worldly circumstances. A clergyman, therefore, ought not to be removed from his cure,

and cannot lawfully be removed from it, but by the same authority which placed him in it; but where a reasonable cause can be assigned for his removal, it cannot be supposed that the bishop would refuse to remove him.

It is true, that licences were formerly granted in such terms as not to be revocable by the bishop in a summary way, without a process in the consistory court; which often was productive of trouble and expence: But this error has been long understood, and the practice has been altered; no bishop now grants a licence but in such terms as to be revocable at any time by himself at pleasure. Some thirty years since, or more, a great alarm was spread among the beneficed clergy, by the decision in the case of Martin against the Rector of St. Ann's, who failed in an attempt to displace his curate; and such was the curate's triumph, that the rector found it necessary to the quiet of the sequel of his life, to make an exchange of his preferments. A report immediately went abroad, and obtained general credit, that the curate, by virtue of a licence, had been maintained in the possession of his curacy in defiance of both the incumbent and the bishop. This report was groundless; and

the whole alarm was owing to a misapprehension of the case. The fact was, that Martin had no licence at the time of the suit, and never had been licensed; and this very circumstance, that the curate was not licensed, was the thing which occasioned the rector's miscarriage. The cause was tried before the great Lord Mansfield; and in giving judgment, Lord Mansfield said, that if the curate had been duly licensed by the bishop of the diocese, he should have dismissed the suit, and referred it to the ecclesiastical court, in which alone a licence would have been cognizable. But there was no licence, but a mere contract between the rector and the curate. Of such contract the ecclesiastical court had no cognizance; it could be tried only in the secular courts, and must be tried upon the same principles as any other mere civil contract. The true inference, therefore, from this case, is, that the incumbent's best security against a litigious disposition in his curate is that the curate should be licensed by the bishop. If the curate is not licensed, but a written agreement has passed between the incumbent and his curate, the curate may sue the incumbent in the courts of law upon the terms of that agreement. If there is neither

licence nor written agreement, the curate, upon a difference with the incumbent, may still resort to a court of law to have his pay for the service done assigned by a jury, upon the principle of *quantum meruit*. But the bishop's licence takes the matter wholly out of the hands of the secular courts. The bishop himself is to judge between incumbent and curate; with appeal, indeed, in some cases, to the archbishop of the province, but without any interference of the secular courts.

But, to make an end of this subject, the law is clear and explicit. To officiate as a clergyman in any diocese, without the authority of the bishop, is a high offence against ecclesiastical order: it is contrary to the most ancient constitutions, forming what may be called the common law of the church; and it is contrary to the explicit injunctions of the canons of the Church of England. The practice is pregnant with so much mischief and disorder, that I am determined to put an end to it, as far as my authority extends; and any one who, after the 1st of October, shall continue to officiate without a licence, or without resorting to the rural dean in order to obtain one, in the manner I have enjoined,—I am persuaded I shall not have to encounter any such

contumacious spirit; but any one (if such a one should be) who will persist in this irregular unlawful practice, at his peril will persist in it.

Having thus opened my mind to you, my reverend brethren, upon what I persuade myself is the only gross irregularity which is generally prevalent in this diocese, I shall now proceed to animadvert upon a point of misconduct for which I am at a loss to find a name. It is not peculiar to this diocese; but is to be found, I fear, among the clergy in all parts of the kingdom: It amounts not certainly to crime, — it is nothing worse than mere inadvertence; but of such a sort as may expose those who are guilty of it to very serious consequences, of which they are not at all aware. I speak of a general inattention among the clergy to the various statutes which have been passed, at different periods of our history, for regulating many of the offices of the church. It seems to me, that the clergy take no more pains to acquire a knowledge of those statutes, than if they were as little concerned in them as in the laws respecting the collection of the customs or the excise; though, for want of that knowledge, they will often be apt to violate them unawares, and, without guilt in

the intention, expose themselves to the heaviest penalties.

In the beginning of Christianity, the church, in her first state of persecution, was independent of the state, and governed by herself. After the establishment of Christianity in the Roman empire by Constantine the Great, the laws which we find in the imperial code relating to the church are chiefly such as establish the rights and immunities of the clergy and the monastic orders. And so it was among ourselves in the earlier periods of our history. But upon the Reformation, when the king took upon himself — what, indeed, of right belongs to the kingly office — to be the head of the ecclesiastical establishment of the nation, a necessity arose for the frequent interference of Parliament to regulate even the public offices of religion; which, in many points, would have been otherwise governed by no law at all, when the usurped authority of the Pope was renounced. And I need not tell you, my reverend brethren, that so much now are we under statute law, that the Common Prayer Book itself is nothing but a long act of Parliament. All the Rubrics are clauses in that statute: But these, in some points of great

importance, have been changed by statutes of a much later date than the latest of the acts of uniformity; and hence arises the danger to those of the clergy who are contented to remain in ignorance of the laws which immediately concern themselves. They think they are safe while they follow the Rubric; but in points in which the enactments of the Rubric have been altered by later statutes, by that very obedience to the old law of the Rubric, they violate the law as it now stands, and incur penalties.

I have been much astonished to discover how much the provisions of so important a statute as the 26th George II. chap. 33., entitled "An Act for the better preventing of clandestine marriages," and known, where it is known at all, by the name of the Marriage Act, are gone into neglect and oblivion. It is some years since, that in a parish church in a great town not very many miles from the metropolis, and within a stone's throw almost of a bishop's palace, to my great surprise, I heard banns of marriage published by the officiating clergyman at the altar after the Nicene Creed. The clergyman, I dare say, had no notion he was doing wrong; — he followed the Rubric: But the

direction of the Rubric in that particular has been altered by the Marriage Act; which directs that banns of marriage shall be published immediately after the Second Lesson; — and it seems to me very doubtful, whether a publication after the Nicene Creed be, as the law now stands, any publication at all; and whether a marriage had under such irregular publication be a good and valid marriage. How those questions might be determined in a court of law, if in any case they were to be brought under the consideration of a court, I will not take upon me to say; but upon the supposition that the determination were to be the most favourable, — that the marriage were allowed to stand good, and the clergyman were not to incur the penalties of an illegal solemnization of marriage, — you are not to imagine that the practice, which I have reason to fear is become too frequent, may be persisted in with impunity; the act having provided no specific penalties for this offence, if the great penalties of the eighth section of the act attach not upon it. An act of Parliament is never with more danger made free with, than when it does not enact its own penalties. If an act says such an offence shall be so punished, then

the punishment is certain and limited; no other and no greater punishment than that appointed by the act can be applied: but if an act of Parliament creates an offence without assigning the particular punishment that shall follow it, the punishment in that case is uncertain and indefinite; for the violation of an act of Parliament, by doing what it forbids, or not doing what it enjoins, or not doing it in the manner in which it enjoins it to be done, — the violation of an act of Parliament in any of these ways is an offence at common law: It is indictable at common law as a misdemeanour; and punishable as a misdemeanour, upon conviction, at the discretion of the judge, if the act itself has not appointed the punishment. The clergy in future will be less excusable than hitherto they have been, if they persist in this irregularity in the publication of banns. The Rubric prefixed to the marriage-service has been altered in the latest editions of the Common Prayer Book — at least in the latest Oxford editions—and made conformable with the Marriage Act.

In all parishes where divine service is usually performed, or in part only performed, in the English language, the rural deans should imme-

diately take order, that the English Common Prayer Book of any edition anterior to this correction be forthwith removed from the reading-desk and the altar, and books of the later editions procured instead of the old ones.

In another point, the provisions of the Marriage Act are too little regarded. By that statute, a marriage cannot lawfully be solemnized but in the church or chapel of the parish or chapelry where both, or one at least, of the parties have been inhabitants during the publication of the banns; or, in case of marriage by licence, for a whole month next before the granting of the licence; and to prevent any imposition upon the minister of the parish or chapelry in the case of banns, he is authorized to refuse to publish banns without a previous notice of seven days. The intention was, to give him time to inquire into the truth of the allegation of the residence of either party in his parish or his chapelry. This inquiry it is his duty to make; and he is expected to make it: But there is much reason to fear that it is too often neglected; and the consequence is, that in populous towns parties are often married, contrary to the statute, where they are perfect strangers, where

neither of them has been an inhabitant of the parish for a single day. I have been informed, upon unquestionable authority, that this practice prevails to a shameful extent in two very considerable cities on the confines of this northern part of the principality. I hope the contagion of the infamous example will not spread into my diocese. If the danger could be supposed to exist, it might be a means of preventing it, to apprize you, that the curates of some large parishes in the vicinity of the metropolis have been very harshly reprimanded in the high Court of Chancery, and have very narrowly escaped commitment, for nothing worse than this neglect; for in them, I am persuaded, it was neglect — perhaps less, ignorance — of the statute. But if in any case there should appear any thing of connivance on the part of the clergyman for the sake of his own gain, I know not to what severity of punishment the secular courts might not think proper to proceed; and I should think it my duty, upon proof of the fact, to suspend the offending clergyman: For you will observe, that this is an offence in the court Christian, as well as in the temporal courts; and all the penalties of the Marriage Act are in addition to the

ecclesiastical penalties; and the Marriage Act, in all points in which it has not altered the Rubrics and the Canons, confirms them; and the punishment of this offence, by the sixty-second canon, is suspension.

By the eighth section of the Marriage Act, "no marriage can be lawfully solemnized, unless by virtue of special licence from the Archbishop of Canterbury, in any other place than a church or chapel, in which banns had been usually published antecedently to the passing of that act; and all marriages solemnized after Lady-day, 1754, in any other place than a church or such public chapel, unless by virtue of such licence, are made null and void to all intents and purposes whatsoever: And any person who, after the said 25th day of March, 1754, should solemnize matrimony in any other place than a church or such public chapel, unless under the authority of such special licence, is to be deemed and adjudged to be guilty of felony; and is to be transported for fourteen years, according to the laws in force for the transportation of felons."

Now it is a notorious fact, that many churches and chapels have been erected and consecrated

since the time when this Marriage Act was passed; and in such chapels there could have been no usage of publication of banns anterior to the Marriage Act, which was itself anterior to their existence; and yet in many of these chapels, the officiating clergy have perpetually solemnized matrimony, not aware that they were doing any thing unlawful. A short time before I was removed from the see of St. David's, it came to my knowledge, that in a very considerable town in that diocese, the irregularity of marrying in a chapel in which, though indeed it was an ancient chapel, banns never in any one instance had been published, had gone to such an extent, that there was hardly a couple in the town who, while they conceived themselves to be man and wife, were not actually living in the eye of the law in concubinage; nor a child in any family born in lawful wedlock; nor a clergyman in the place, though the clergymen in the place were highly respectable, who had not, not once or twice, but repeatedly for many years of his life, been committing acts of felony.

Soon after my translation to this see, I discovered that the like irregularity had been going on

here. The chapel of Voelas is a public chapel duly consecrated, in the district of Tir Abbot, in the parish of Llanûfydd in Denbighshire; but the first erection of it was of later date by many years than the passing of the Marriage Act; consequently there had been no usage of the publication of banns in that chapel anterior to the Marriage Act; yet, from the time of its consecration, the perpetual curate went on solemnizing matrimony in the chapel, with as little apprehension of his own danger, or the nullity of the marriages so solemnized, as if it had been a parish church.

However, my reverend brethren, you may put your minds at ease; and the parties so unlawfully married may put their minds at ease, — if it may give ease to your minds, to know that all that is past is pardoned and obliterated; and to theirs, to know that the knot so loosely tied at first is now drawn tight and hard and made indissoluble, and that the legitimacy of their offspring is secured.

In the spring of the year 1804, I carried two bills through Parliament. The one is a general act, the 77th chapter of the 44th of the King, entitled, "An Act to render valid certain marriages solemnized in certain churches and public

chapels in which banns had not usually been published before or at the time of passing an act made in the 26th year of the reign of his late Majesty King George the Second, entitled, 'An Act for the better preventing clandestine marriages.'" The other specially relates to the chapel of Voelas. It is the 88th chapter of those acts of the same year of the King which are local and personal, but to be judicially noticed. It is entitled, "An Act for enabling the officiating minister for the time being of the chapel of Voelas, in the county of Denbigh, to publish banns and solemnize marriages in the said chapel."

By the former, the public act, all marriages solemnized in public chapels in which banns had not usually been published, without any other deviation from the provisions of the Marriage Act, before the 25th day of March, 1805, are made good and valid; and the clergymen who so solemnized them are indemnified against the penalties of the Marriage Act; and the registers of such marriages are made good and lawful evidence in all courts of law and equity. But it is farther enacted, "that the registers of all such marriages as hereby are made to be valid in law, shall, within fourteen

days next after the said 25th day of March, 1805, be removed to the parish church of the parish in which such chapel shall be situate; or, in the case of a chapel extra-parochially situate, then to the parish church next adjoining to such extra-parochial place."

I hope the provisions of this statute have been attended to; and you will take especial notice, that the benefit of this statute comes down only to the 25th of March, 1805. If since that day any marriages have been or shall be solemnized in chapels in which banns had not been usually published before the passing of the act of the 26th of George the Second, all such marriages are still null and void, as they would have been if this act of mine never had been passed; the clergymen so solemnizing them are not indemnified; and the registers are not evidence in any court of law or equity.

By the other, the local statute, the curate of the chapel of Voelas, in the district of Tir Abbot, in the parish of Llanûfydd in Denbighshire, but of that chapel only, is empowered, from and after the 25th day of March, 1805, to publish banns of marriage in the said chapel, between persons residing, or one of them residing, in the district of Tir

Abbot; and to solemnize marriages in the said chapel, according to the form contained in the Book of Common Prayer, in pursuance of such banns, or by license lawfully granted; and to continue to keep a register of such marriages according to the form required by law. All marriages so solemnized in the said chapel, and duly registered, are made good and valid in law; and the register is made evidence in all courts of law and equity.

It seemed expedient to the patron of the chapel, to the rector of Llanûfydd, and to myself, that this privilege of marrying should be granted to the chapel of Voelas on account of the immoderate distance of the district of Tir Abbot from the mother-church. Upon that ground, upon my motion, and with their consent, this act was passed. But you will remember, that this act applies to the chapel of Voelas only; and the curate of any other chapel, circumstanced like that of Voelas, is not to imagine that he is at liberty to do in that other chapel what the curate of Voelas lawfully does in his.

The instances I have alleged (and many more might be added) are sufficient to show of what

importance it is to the parochial clergy to acquire some knowledge of the laws which relate to their ministration in the public offices of the church.

But, I may be asked, how are the clergy to acquire this knowledge, of so much importance to them? The law, even the first principles of the law, unfortunately make no part of the education of persons intended for holy orders, even of those who are the best educated; and if it did, these laws lie scattered all over the statute-book, mixed with the general mass of the statute law upon all sorts of subjects; and the statutes at large are far above the purchase of the greater part of the parochial clergy, even if the house upon the living be large enough to contain the volumes, which is not the case of every Welsh vicarage. Some of the beneficed clergy, indeed, are put into the commission of the peace; and they have an opportunity of acquiring what little smattering of the law they may derive from occasionally consulting "Burn's Justice" and "Burn's Ecclesiastical Law," elucidated to them by the wise comments of the village attorney, and by conferences with their brother-justices at the quarter-sessions. But, with the exception of these dis-

tinguished few, how is the parish-priest to attain to a knowledge of the secular laws framed for the regulation of the ministry, beyond what he finds in the Rubric, till unfortunately he becomes the victim of their penalties, — especially, considering the number of new laws that are passing every day?

In another place, I should take upon me to say that this well deserves the attention of the Legislature; and should be a hint to them to be less prompt than of late they have shown a disposition to be, to meddle in matters purely ecclesiastical. But it is with great pleasure that I inform you, that the University of Oxford has lately done much to remedy the evil, and remove the difficulties the clergy lie under in this particular. A book has been published by the University, under the title of "The Clergyman's Assistant," very moderate in size, and cheap in price; it contains almost all the laws prescribing the clergyman's duty in the public offices of the church, with some others in which the clergy are much interested. I would advise every clergyman to possess himself without delay of this "Clergyman's Assistant;" a very useful assistant he will

find it. In particular, I would request the rural deans to possess themselves of it, — that they may be able with more ease to themselves to assist the clergy of their respective districts with their advice.

I have found so much to say upon these topics, which I conceive to be of great importance, that I have yet said nothing upon a point that must deeply interest both you and me, — the present state of religion and of religious sects in this diocese. But I cannot permit this assembly to break up without more than a word or two upon that subjeet.

It appears to me, by your returns, that Dissenters of any denomination, over and above so many of them as may be mixed with the Methodists, are not numerous. The Methodists are very numerous; and, if I am rightly informed, their numbers have been for some years in these parts increasing. Under the general denomination of Methodists, a great variety of persons, differing in many points from one another, some Churchmen, some Dissenters of different denominations, but chiefly, I believe, Anabaptists, are included; a very large proportion of them pious, well-meaning

people; and none of them, as far as I can understand, dissenters in *doctrine* from the Established Church. In *doctrine*, I say, they are not dissenters, however some of them may disapprove and many of them lightly regard her discipline. Among themselves, they were originally divided into two principal branches, distinguished by a difference in their religious opinions, — the followers of Mr. John Wesley, who were Arminians; and the followers of Mr. George Whitfield, who were Calvinists. The distinction, I believe, still subsists, though the leaders are gone; and it is said, with what truth I pretend not to know, that the Arminian branch is lowered in its numbers since Mr. Wesley's death, many of them going over to the Calvinists. How the fact may be, I know not; and I hold it of very little importance.

Some few years since, there was much reason to apprehend a coalition between the Methodists and the Jacobins; the latter, in the depth of their hypocrisy, affecting a zeal for the religious opinions of the Methodists, in order to draw them over to their own political opinions. But, by the events of the times, and the good sense of the people of Great Britain, Jacobinism, thanks be to God, is

extinguished in this country: The Methodists, with their fellow-subjects, are rescued from that delusion; and are now, we hope, what the greater part of them in the lifetime of Mr. John Wesley unquestionably were, well-affected loyal subjects.

It may seem strange to some, that I should have said, that none of the Methodists are dissenters from the Established Church in *doctrine*, — when at the same time I have said, that they consist of two principal branches, the one Arminian, and the other Calvinistic; since it has been the fashion of late to talk of Arminianism as the system of the Church of England, and of Calvinism as something opposite to it, to which the Church is hostile. That I may not be misunderstood in what I have said or may have occasion farther to say upon this subject, I must here declare, that I use the words Arminianism and Calvinism in that restricted sense in which they are now generally taken, — to denote the doctrinal part of each system, as unconnected with the principles either of Arminians or Calvinists upon church discipline and church government. This being premised, I assert, what I often have before asserted, and by God's grace I will persist in the assertion to my

dying day, that so far is it from the truth that the Church of England is decidedly Arminian and hostile to Calvinism, that the truth is this, — that upon the principal points in dispute between the Arminians and the Calvinists — upon all the points of *doctrine* characteristic of the two sects, the Church of England maintains an absolute neutrality; her Articles explicitly assert nothing but what is believed both by Arminians and by Calvinists. The Calvinists indeed hold some opinions relative to the same points which the Church of England has not gone the length of asserting in her Articles; but neither has she gone the length of explicitly contradicting those opinions; insomuch, that there is nothing to hinder the Arminian and the highest Supralapsarian Calvinist from walking together in the Church of England and Ireland as friends and brothers, if they both approve the discipline of the Church, and both are willing to submit to it. Her discipline has been approved — it has been submitted to — it has been in former times most ably and zealously defended — by the highest Supralapsarian Calvinists. Such was the great Usher; such was Whitgift; such were many more, — burning and

shining lights of our Church in her early days (when first she shook off the Papal tyranny), long since gone to the resting-place of the spirits of the just!

The Methodists, therefore, of the Calvinistic, are not, more than those of the Arminian persuasion, dissenters from the Established Church in *doctrine*. The Calvinists contradict not the avowed dogmata of the Church; nor has the Church in her dogmata explicitly condemned or contradicted them. They have, therefore, no ground or excuse in the opinions which they profess to hold for separation from the Church; and Churchmen, on the other hand, would be much to blame, if by quarrelling with their doctrinal Calvinism they were to provoke them to a separation. Any one may hold all the theological opinions of Calvin, hard and extravagant as some of them may seem, and yet be a sound member of the Church of England and Ireland, — certainly a much sounder member than one who, loudly declaiming against those opinions, (which, if they be erroneous, are not errors that affect the essence of our common faith,) runs into all the nonsense, the impiety, the abominations, of the Arian, the Unitarian, and the

Pelagian heresies; denying in effect "the Lord who bought him."

These are the things against which you should whet your zeal, rather than against opinions which, if erroneous, are not sinful. What the Church has tolerated, her sons are bound to tolerate; and to treat differences of opinion, which may subsist without blame within the pale of the Church itself, with lenity and gentleness.

Indeed it may seem strange, that any one who has gone deep enough in the subject to be aware of the doubts and difficulties which hang upon both sides of the question (it is hard to say on which side they are the greatest), whichsoever way his own opinion may incline, should venture to be confident and peremptory in the condemnation of the opposite. Certainly the greatest fault of the Calvinists has been their want of charity for those who differ from them. It is to be hoped that this uncharitable spirit will not take possession of the other side; but, as far as my observation goes, moderation has not prevailed in the controversies with the Methodists, in which some have been of late perhaps too forward to engage.

It is said that the Methodists are unremitting in

their attempts to alienate the minds of the laity from their proper pastors, the regular clergy. I fear there is too much truth in the accusation; and this schismatical spirit, and this desire of promoting schism, I take to be their principal crime; and a heavy crime indeed it is. But the effectual way to counteract these attempts, and to stifle schism in its very birth, is not to enter into controversy in the pulpit upon abstruse points of doctrine, which have no sort of connection with the question concerning the duty of church communion and the sinfulness of causeless separation. But the effectual and sure way to counteract their attempts against you, is not to attack their religious opinions, but to take heed to the soundness of your own doctrine and the innocency of your own lives. If you preach a doctrine that goes to the hearts of your hearers (and the genuine doctrines of Christianity will always go to the heart of every one who hears them), — if you adorn that doctrine by the good example of your own lives, the laity will be attached to you in spite of all your enemies can say against you. The pure, unsophisticated, unmutilated doctrine of the Gospel, will always speak for itself: If you really preach that doctrine,

they who tell the people you preach it not will meet with no credit; and what is more, many of those schismatics themselves will be conciliated, — they will be cured of their schism, and brought to repent of it. This is the method of self-defence I would advise you to pursue. To which I must add, that you ought, in your discourses from the pulpit, to take frequent occasion to instruct the people in the origin, the nature, and the privileges, of that society which is called the Church; and set forth to them how much it is the duty of every member of the Church to hold the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, and the guilt that is incurred by separations of communion. From controversy in your sermons upon what are called the Calvinistic points, I would by all means advise you to abstain: Believe me, they are not the proper subjects for the village pulpit. Mistake me not. It is not my meaning, that you are never to preach upon the subjects of faith and repentance — Christ's atonement — justification — grace — the new birth — good works, as the necessary fruits of that faith which justifies, and the symptoms of the believer's sanctification — of the merit of Christ's obedience, and the want of merit in

our own: Upon these subjects you cannot preach too often; but handle them not controversially, but dogmatically; — lay down the doctrine categorically, without disputing about it; taking care to stick close to the Bible, the Thirty-nine Articles, and the Homilies: Let your proofs be texts of Scripture applying immediately to the point in their first and obvious meaning, without the aid either of critical inference or metaphysical argument. By this method and way of preaching, you will never bewilder either yourselves or your hearers; and you will effectually secure the people against the errors of the Antinomians on the one hand and of the Pelagians on the other. The Calvinistic doctrine is too apt to degenerate into the one, and the Arminian into the other; but true Calvinism and true Arminianism are guiltless of both.

I have long been persuaded, that the best thing for the Church would be, that the Calvinistic controversy, as it is called, should be suffered to go to sleep; and the worst thing for the Church will be, if it is kept alive by being made the perpetual topic of preachers in common congregations. It relates to points involved in so much obscurity —

so far above the powers of the human mind, that the differences of opinions upon them among the very best Christians can never cease, because the difficulties never can be cleared up; and the effect of the controversy will never be to reconcile the jarring opinions, but to dissolve brotherly love and disunite the members of Christ's body. But if ever you should be provoked to take a part in these disputes, of all things I entreat you to avoid, what is now become very common, acrimonious abuse of Calvinism and of Calvin. Remember, I beseech you, that some tenderness is due to the errors and extravagancies of a man eminent as he was in his day for his piety, his wisdom, and his learning, and to whom the Reformation in its beginnings is so much indebted. At least take especial care, before you aim your shafts at Calvinism, that you know what is Calvinism and what is not, — that in that mass of doctrine which it is of late become the fashion to abuse under the name of Calvinism, you can distinguish with certainty between that part of it which is nothing better than Calvinism, and that which belongs to our common Christianity and the general faith of the Reformed Churches; lest, when you mean

only to fall foul of Calvinism, you should unwarily attack something more sacred and of higher origin. I must say, that I have found great want of this discrimination in some late controversial writings, on the side of the Church, as they were meant to be, against the Methodists; the authors of which have acquired much applause and reputation, but with so little real knowledge of their subject, that give me the principles upon which these writers argue, and I will undertake to convict — I will not say Arminians only and Archbishop Laud — but upon these principles, I will undertake to convict the fathers of the Council of Trent of Calvinism: so closely is a great part of that which is now ignorantly called Calvinism interwoven with the very rudiments of Christianity. Better were it for the Church if such apologists would withhold their services.

" Non tali auxilio, nec defensoribus istis."

But the true lesson to be drawn from the failure of such disputants is, — that it is not for every one who may possess somewhat more than the ordinary share of learning to meddle with these difficult subjects.

My reverend brethren, I am sensible I am addressing a body of men who have had the advantage of a liberal and a learned as well as a religious education; and I would not have it supposed that I think meanly of their talents and endowments. To some among you, — perhaps, however, not to the greater part, certainly not to all, — a residence of many years at the University, with access to its well-furnished libraries, may have afforded opportunity, which those to whom it was afforded doubtless would improve, of acquiring a minute and accurate knowledge of the whole history of the Reformation, its beginnings and its progress, — of the divisions arising from differences of opinion among the different denominations of the Reformed — the differences between the Lutherans and the Calvinists from one another — the differences of the various subdivisions of the Lutherans and the various subdivisions of the Calvinists among themselves. In the same years of academic leisure, you will have studied the controversial writings of Luther on the one side and Erasmus on the other, upon the subjects of original sin, free will, and sovereign grace; you will have made yourselves acquainted with the Confessions of Faith of the

different Reformed Churches; of the Churches of Saxony in particular; and you will have given the attention they deserve to the excellent discussions of the most learned and most enlightened of the reformers, Philip Melancthon; you will have studied the Canons of the Council of Trent, and the Decrees of the Synod of Dort; you will not have neglected the writings of the two great metaphysical fathers, St. Austin of the Latin Church, and Johannes Damascenus of the Greek; and you will have conversed so familiarly with the sages of the Academy and the Porch, that you will be able to talk as if you had a meaning when you venture to discourse of the order of the Divine decrees, and to speak of first and last in the energies of the Divine mind. With all this learning, but not without a very considerable share of it, and with these dialectic talents, you may perhaps be able to grapple with the difficulties of the Quinquarticular controversy without discredit to yourselves. Still would I earnestly persuade those who may feel themselves the best qualified for the argument, to abstain from it in their discourses before common congregations. They might engage in it without discredit to

themselves; but with what profit or advantage, I would ask, to themselves or to their hearers? — Certainly with none at all. These intricate questions tend to nothing but perplexity and scepticism; and the discussions of them conduce to endless discord and dissension. You know who they were who are said to have sought the solitude of a retired hill, there to pursue their arrogant speculations.

> " Of things abstruse they reason'd high, —
> Of Providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate —
> Fix'd fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute;
> And found no end, in wandering mazes lost."

Leave these barren disquisitions to the theologians of that school. Apply yourselves with the whole strength and power of your minds to do the work of evangelists. Proclaim to those who are at enmity with God, and children of his wrath, the glad tidings of Christ's pacification; sound the alarm to awaken to a life of righteousness a world lost and dead in trespasses and sins; lift aloft the blazing torch of revelation, to scatter its rays over them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death, and guide the footsteps of the benighted wanderer into the paths of life and peace.

A

CHARGE

TO

THE CLERGY OF THE

ARCHDEACONRY OF ST. ALBAN'S, &c.

MY REVEREND BRETHREN,

THE business of the Christian Priesthood, like that of every secular occupation, consisting in two branches, the Speculative, and the Practical; if any of us, by a particular blessing of Providence attending our temporal fortunes, are released from the necessity, to which the greater part submit, of a severe and constant toil in the practical branch of the profession, as the labour by which they have to earn their daily bread; it seems to be our particular duty to consecrate the leisure we enjoy, if I may borrow an expression from the profane

sciences, to the theory of religion. And in the present state of religious learning in this country, it should seem that the cultivation of that branch of it, which is called Sacred Criticism, and particularly the elucidation of the text of the Old Testament, by a diligent use of the materials which the unwearied industry of a learned critic, supported by the munificence of the best of princes, hath supplied, is the study in which, of all others, our talents and our industry might be best employed. It is, however, to be remembered, that the writings of the Old Testament are only of a secondary importance; for the evidence which they afford of the truth of our Lord's pretensions, and for the light which they throw upon the doctrines of the Gospel; which is indeed so great, that an inattention to these more ancient parts of the Code of Revelation is likely to be one principal cause of the scepticism which unhappily prevails among our modern sectaries, concerning the original dignity of the Redeemer's nature, and the expiatory virtue of his sufferings. But in whatever degree the Jewish Scriptures may be useful for the general confirmation of Christianity; it is from their relation to the Gospel, to which, we have

been told by the highest authority, the Mosaic dispensation was but a prelude or preparative, that they derive the whole of the importance which they yet retain. A profound and critical acquaintance with them is useful only as means conducive to an end; and in this, as in other cases, every solid advantage will be lost, that might be reaped from the improvement of the means, if, in the too assiduous pursuit of these, we lose sight of the end to which they should be made subservient. The Theology of the Christian Revelation is the great object, to which every other branch of sacred literature is naturally subordinate. To extract it from the writings of the Apostles and Evangelists, connected with the earlier revelations; to assert and defend their genuine doctrine; to preserve it entire; and to maintain it in its native purity, unadulterated by the additions of superstition, undebased and undiminished by the refinements of philosophy; this is the great business to which those of us, who feel themselves at ease and in affluence, and masters of the leisure which affluence affords, should consider their talents and their studies to be solemnly devoted.

2. My Reverend Brethren, I would be understood to speak with sentiments of respect, of those whom I shall take the liberty to call the labouring part of the parochial clergy: of those whose lives are spent in a constant attendance on the public ceremonies of external worship, or in the charitable and necessary business of instructing the people of the lower ranks in the first principles of the doctrine of Christ. Of these venerable men, of their godly labours, and honourable occupations, I would be understood to speak with reverence and respect. Of all the departments of the sacred office, the business of that which it is their lot to fill, is perhaps the most immediately conducive to general edification; and for the zeal and ability with which it is discharged by them, they are justly entitled to the highest degrees of veneration and esteem. It is matter of concern and grief to every serious Christian, that their rewards in this life should but seldom correspond, in any fair proportion, with the worth of their characters, and the importance of their services. Thanks be to Him, of whom the whole family is named, their hope is full of glory. It is felt, I am persuaded, by themselves as the heaviest inconvenience of their present

situation, that their employment, useful and honourable as it must ever be confessed to be, partakes in some degree of the nature of a worldly business; requiring a labour of the body, and a distracting intercourse with the world, which leave little opportunity for private study and solitary meditation. In circumstances so unfriendly to literary improvement, it redounds highly to their praise, that they are so eminently well qualified, as they generally approve themselves to be, to discharge the plain duty of catechists, with credit to themselves, and advantage to the church of God. To deliver the doctrine of the Gospel in that plain and general way, which, if it were to meet with no opposition from the disputers of the world, might be sufficient to give it its full effect upon the heart of the hearer. But occasions will from time to time arise, when the truth must be not only taught, but defended. The stubborn Infidel will raise objections against the first principles of our faith; and objections must be answered. The restless spirit of scepticism will suggest difficulties in the system, and create doubts about the particulars of the Christian doctrine: difficulties must be removed, and doubts must be satisfied.

But above all, the scruples must be composed, which the refinements of a false philosophy, patronized as they are in the present age by men no less amiable for the general purity of their manners than distinguished by their scientific attainments, will be too apt to raise in the minds of the weaker brethren. And this is the service to which they, whom the indulgence of Providence hath released from the more laborious offices of the priesthood, stand peculiarly engaged. To them their more occupied brethren have a right to look up, in these emergencies, for support and succour in the common cause. It is for them to stand forth the champions of the common faith, and the advocates of their order. It is for them to wipe off the aspersions injuriously cast upon the sons of the Establishment, as uninformed in the true grounds of the doctrine which they teach, or insincere in the belief of it. To this duty they are indispensably obliged, by their providential exemption from work of a harder kind. It is the proper business of the station which is allotted them in Christ's household. And deep will be their shame, and insupportable their punishment, if, in the great day of reckoning, it should appear, that

they have received the wages of a service which hath never been performed.

3. You will easily conjecture, that what has led me into these reflections, is the extraordinary attempt, which hath been lately made, to unsettle the faith, and to break up the constitution of every ecclesiastical establishment in Christendom. Such is the avowed object of a recent publication, which bears the title of *A History of the Corruptions of Christianity;* among which the Catholic Doctrine of the Trinity, in the author's opinion, holds a principal place. With what success he hath attacked this fundamental article, and how far he hath been able to invalidate the argument from early and uniform tradition, this Reverend Assembly will be competent to judge, from the brief view which shall be laid before them, of the account which he attempts to give of the rise and progress of the doctrine in the three first ages, accompanied with specimens of the proofs by which his pretended history, in this part of it, is supported.

I.

1. The opinion which he maintains, is in general the same which was first, I think, propagated in the last century by Daniel Zuicker, a Prussian physician, of the Socinian persuasion; and, upon the authority of that writer, hath been current ever since among the Unitarians of this country. *That the doctrine of the Trinity, in the form in which it is now maintained, is of no greater antiquity than the Nicene Council: That it is the result of a gradual corruption of the doctrine of the Gospel, which took its rise in an opinion first advanced in the second century by certain converts from the Platonic School; who, expounding the beginning of St. John's Gospel by the Platonic Doctrine of the Logos, ascribed a sort of secondary divinity to our Saviour, affirming that he was no other than the second principle of the Platonic Triad, who had assumed a human body to converse with man: That before this innovation, of which Justin Martyr is made the author, the faith of the whole Christian Church, but particularly of the Church of Jerusalem, was simply and strictly Unitarian. The immediate disciples of the Apostles conceived our Saviour to*

be a man, whose existence commenced in the womb of the Virgin; and they thought him in no respect the object of worship. The next succeeding race worshipped him, indeed, but they had, however, no higher notions of his Divinity, than those which were maintained by the followers of Arius in the fourth century. In short, the first race of Christians, in Dr. Priestley's opinion, were Unitarians in the strictest sense of the word; the second, Arians.* As Dr. Priestley follows Zuicker in these extravagant assertions, so the arguments, by which he would support them, are in all essential points the same which were alleged to the same purpose, either by that writer, or by Simon Episcopius. Episcopius, though himself no Socinian, very indiscreetly concurred with the Socinians of his time, in maintaining, that the opinion of the mere humanity of Christ had prevailed very generally in the first ages, and was never deemed heretical by the Fathers of the Orthodox persuasion; at least not in such degree, as to exclude from the communion of the church. The opinion, I believe, had its rise in no worse principle than

* See this brief statement of Dr. Priestley's opinion defended against his objections to it, in the 13th of my Letters in Reply.

the charitable temper of the man, and his just abhorrence of the spirit of persecution, with which Christians of every denomination were in his time much infected; which is indeed itself of all heresies by far the most malignant, being the most opposite to that general philanthropy, which is the root of all social virtue, and the highest ornament of the Christian profession. Episcopius wished, as every good man must wish, to see a general toleration established; which he thought could not be more effectually recommended, than by the example of the harmony which subsisted among Christians in the earliest ages. The force of his example he would naturally think improved, in proportion as the idea of the harmony was heightened; the idea of the harmony heightened, as the controversies of the first Christians were magnified and multiplied. These sentiments inclined him to credit, as historians, the same writers whom, as divines, he held in little estimation. He gave easy credit to Unitarian writers, when they represented the differences of opinion in the early churches, as much greater than ever really obtained; and the tenderness for sectaries, as more than was ever practised; and

while he opposed their doctrine, he vouched their story. The purposes of charity had been better served, without injury to the cause of truth, had the talents of this able writer been employed to set the doctrine of universal toleration on its only firm and proper basis: to show, that although in dubious points of doctrine, the judgment of antiquity, wherever it is clear, must be allowed to be decisive; yet the just severity of the primitive Church towards the refractory heretics, whose visionary doctrines, joined with their contempt of apostolic authority, disgraced the rising community and obstructed the propagation of the truth, constitutes no example for the control of fair enquiry, or for the punishment of mere speculative heresy in these later times, by any harsher means than the necessary exclusion of dissenters from the honours and emoluments of national establishments. Had the opinion which he chose to adopt been true, Simon Episcopius, with his scanty knowledge of ecclesiastical antiquities, was but ill qualified to maintain it. False and groundless as it was, his natural acuteness enabled him to furnish the Socinians of his time, whose cause in the doctrinal part he little thought to serve, with the

best arguments that have ever been produced on the Unitarian side of the question. Our modern historian, in support of his imaginary progress of opinions from the Unitarian doctrine to the Nicene faith, hath produced few, if any, arguments which make directly for his purpose, but what are to be found in the writings either of Zuicker or Episcopius. Nor is a single argument to be found in the writings either of Zuicker or Episcopius, which is not unanswerably confuted by our learned Dr. George Bull, afterwards Lord Bishop of St. David's, in three celebrated treatises, which deserve the particular attention of every one, who would take upon him to be either a teacher or an historian of the Christian Faith: the first, *A Defence of the Nicene Faith;* the second, *The Judgment of the Catholic Church, in the first Ages, concerning the Necessity of believing that our Lord Jesus Christ is very God;* the third, *The Primitive and Apostolical Tradition concerning the true Divinity of Jesus Christ.*

2. It seems very extraordinary, that any one should presume to revive the defeated arguments of Zuicker and Episcopius, without attempting to

make them good against the objections of a writer of Dr. Bull's eminence. Nor is it easy to conceive, what apology can be made for what should seem so gross an insult on the learning and discernment of the age; unless it be, that Dr. Priestley imagines, that although he hath abstained from a particular discussion of Dr. Bull's arguments, he hath in effect answered them, by the new light which he persuades himself he has thrown upon the subject: that by the evidence which he thinks he hath brought of the truth of his own narrative, in every branch of it, he supposes that he hath virtually replied to all objections: that he hath confirmed the assumptions from which Zuicker and Episcopius reasoned, which Dr. Bull pretended to deny; and that, by confirming their assumptions, he hath made good their arguments, although he may have taken no notice of their learned antagonist. What new illustrations the subject hath received from Dr. Priestley's labours will best appear from specimens of the arguments by which he would support his three principal assumptions: namely, that the first Christians were Unitarians in the strictest sense of the word; that the Deity of Christ was first taught by a Platonizing sect; and

that the doctrine which they introduced was the very same for which, in a later age, Arius was condemned. If his proof of these fundamental propositions should be found to rest upon precarious assumptions, perverted history, misconstrued and misapplied quotations: if his facts should appear to be confuted by his own authorities, and his conclusions to be defeated by his own arguments: if the resemblance between the Christian and the Platonic Trinity should appear to be no mark of corruption in the prevailing opinions: the Catholic faith, which hath heretofore sustained so many rude assaults, will hardly find its mortal wound in the stroke which Dr. Priestley imagines he hath inflicted.

3. The first argument which is produced in support of the first assertion, "that the faith of the "first Christians was simply Unitarian," is built upon an assumption, which, could it be proved to be true, would indeed render the conclusion obvious and inevitable. "That the doctrine of our "Lord's mere humanity is the clear doctrine of "the Scriptures, and that the Apostles never

"taught any other."* It will easily be granted, that the Apostles never taught the contrary of any doctrine that is clearly delivered in their writings; and that the faith of the first converts was a belief of neither more nor less than the Apostles taught. So that the sense of the Scriptures in any article being once clearly ascertained, the argument from the clear confessed sense of Scripture to the preaching of the Apostles, and from the preaching of the Apostles to the primitive faith, will be firm and valid. But the professed object of our learned adversary's undertaking requires an argument that should go the contrary way,—from the primitive faith to the sense of the Scriptures. It is the professed object of his undertaking, to exhibit a view of the gradual changes of opinions, in order to ascertain the faith of the first ages; and he would ascertain the faith of the first ages, in order to settle the sense of the Scriptures in disputed points. He is, therefore, not at liberty to assume any sense of the Scriptures, which, because it is his own, he may be pleased to call the clear sense, for a proof that the original faith was such, as would

* History of Corruptions, vol. i. p. 6.

confirm the sense he wishes to establish. His sense of the Scriptures being not acknowledged by the majority of the Christian Church, whatever may be his own judgment of its clearness, it can only pass for a particular interpretation. When this particular interpretation is alleged, in proof that the original faith of the Church of Jerusalem was such as might justify that interpretation; the middle term of the argument is no otherwise confirmed than by an assumption of the principal matter in debate; and so long as the sixth page of the first volume of Dr. Priestley's history shall be extant, the masters of the dialectic art will be at no loss for an example of the circulating syllogism. To Dr. Priestley it may be very clear, that when St. John, speaking of the Logos, of which he had already affirmed that it was in the beginning, says, "This person" (for that is the natural force of the Greek pronoun οὗτος*)—"This person was in the "beginning with God; all things were made by "him, and without him was not any thing made "that was made:" it may be very clear to Dr. Priestley, that St. John, speaking of the Logos, as

* See the third of my Letters in reply, and the Appendix to the Letters, No. II.

of a person who had been from the beginning, and had done these great things, means to affirm that the Logos is no person; nor is, otherwise than in a figurative sense, to be called an agent in any business: that he means to contradict those, who held that the Logos was any thing more than an attribute of the Divine Mind; to silence them; to extinguish their profane innovation by his definitive sentence upon the question: and that when he speaks of eternity as belonging to the Logos as a person, it is, that this was the most explicit way, in which he could give the Christian Church to understand, that eternity is only accidental to the Logos, the substance to which it properly belongs, being that Mind of which the Logos itself is only another attribute.* It may be very clear to Dr. Priestley's apprehension, that when St. Paul affirms of Christ, that he is the "image of the invisible "God, the first born of every creature, by whom "all things were created," and explains in what extent the words "all things" are to be understood, by an enumeration of the constituent parts, and governing powers of the Universe; "things in

* See Hist. of Corrupt. vol. i. pp. 10. 12.

" heaven and things in earth, visible and invisible,
" whether they be thrones, or dominions, or princi-
" palities, or powers, all things were created by him
" and for him, and he is before all things, and by
" him all things consist*;" it may be very clear to Dr. Priestley, that St. Paul in these expressions would be understood to assert, that Christ was nothing more than a man, and was no otherwise the creator of any thing, than as he was the founder of the Christian Church. All this may be very clear to Dr. Priestley's apprehension; and equal to the clearness of the apprehension, which he imagines he enjoys, that this was the doctrine of the Apostles, will be the confidence of his persuasion, that it was also the faith of their first converts. But to others, who have not the sagacity to discern, that the true meaning of an inspired writer must be the reverse of the natural and obvious sense of the expressions which he employs; the force of the conclusion, that the primitive Christians could not believe our Lord to be more than a mere man, because the Apostles had told them he was the Creator of the universe, will be little understood.

* Coloss. i. 15—17.

4. Another argument is built upon a pretended silence of St. John, about the error of those who maintained the mere humanity of Christ*, in his first Epistle: in which he is supposed to censure those who believed Christ to be a man only in appearance, in the severest manner; but upon those who believed him to be nothing more than man, the Apostle, as he is understood by Dr. Priestley, passes no censure. From which it is to be concluded, that the latter opinion is no error, but the very truth of the Gospel.

5. But here the question is, whether the opinion of Christ's mere humanity is really passed over by St. John, as Dr. Priestley supposes, uncensured and unnoticed. This question will be differently resolved, according as different interpretations of the Apostle's expressions are adopted. This argument, therefore, is of the same complexion with the former, and labours under the same defect. A particular sense of the Epistle is alleged, in proof of a pretended fact; which fact must itself support the interpretation. "Every spirit," says St. John, "which confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the

* Hist. of Corrupt. vol. i. pp. 10. 13., and vol. ii. p. 485.

"flesh, is of God."* "That is," says Dr. Priestley, "every spirit is of God, that confesses that Jesus "Christ is truly a man."† But it should seem, that the proposition that he was truly a man, if he was nothing more than man, is very awkwardly and unnaturally expressed by the phrase of his "coming in the flesh:" for in what other way was it possible for a mere man to come? The turn of the expression seems to lead to the notion of a Being, who had his choice of different ways of coming: a notion which is implied in other passages of Holy Writ, and is explicitly expressed in a book little inferior in authority to the canonical writings; in the first epistle of Clemens Romanus; in a passage of that epistle which Dr. Priestley, somewhat unfortunately for his cause, hath chosen for the basis of an argument of that holy father's heterodoxy. "The sceptre of the majesty of "God," says Clemens, "our Lord Jesus Christ, "came not in the pomp of pride and arrogance, "*although he had it in his power.*"‡ Clemens, it seems, conceived, that the manner of coming was in the power and choice of the person who was to

* 1 John, iv. 2.

† Hist. of Corrupt. vol. i. p. 10. ‡ Chap. xvi.

come. St. John's expressions evidently lead to the same notion. It should seem, therefore, that St. John's assertions concerning the spirits that maintain or deny that Jesus is come in the flesh; that the one are of God, and the other of anti-christ; were levelled not singly at the heresy of the *Docetæ*, as Dr. Priestley imagines, but equally at that and at another branch of the Gnostic heresy, which divided Jesus Christ into two persons: Jesus, who was supposed to be a mere man, the son of Mary by her husband Joseph; and the Christ, a divine being, who was considered as the genius, or tutelary angel, of the man; not however so united with the man, as to constitute one person, or to partake of the man's sufferings. The first Epistle of St. John asserts the doctrine of a true and proper incarnation, in opposition to the extravagancies of both these sects. The Apostle makes the acknowledgment of the incarnation, in which both an antecedent divinity and an assumed humanity are implied, the criterion by which the true teachers are to be distinguished from the false. And in the positive assertion of the incarnation, and the express censure of the opposite doctrine as anti-christian, he reprobates the notion of Christ's

mere humanity in the only sense in which we have any certain evidence that he lived to see it maintained. It appears, therefore, that to confess that "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh*," and to affirm that Jesus Christ is truly a man, are propositions not perfectly equivalent. Dr. Priestley indeed hath shown himself very sensible of the difference. He would not otherwise have found it necessary, for the improvement of his argument, in reciting the third verse of the fourth chapter of St. John's first Epistle, to change the expressions which he found in the public translation, for others which correspond far less exactly with the Greek text. For the words "Jesus Christ is come IN the flesh," Dr. Priestley substitutes these, "Jesus Christ is "come OF the flesh."† That he is come IN the flesh, and that he is come OF the flesh, are two very distinct propositions. The one affirms an incarnation; the other a mortal extraction. The first is St. John's assertion; the second is Dr. Priestley's. Perhaps Dr. Priestley hath discovered of St. John as of St. Paul, that his reasoning is

* 1 John, iv. 2. Ιησουν Χριστον εν σαρκι εληλυθοτα.

† Hist. of Corrupt. vol. i. p. 10. lin. 15.

sometimes inconclusive*, and his language inaccurate: and he might think it no unwarrantable liberty to correct an expression, which, as not perfectly corresponding with his own system, he could not entirely approve. It would have been but fair to advertise his readers of so capital an emendation; an emendation for which no support is to be found in the Greek text, nor even in the varieties of any MSS. We are informed, indeed, by Socrates the historian† (and his testimony is confirmed by the Latin of the Vulgate), of a very considerable variety of some of the ancient MSS. But it is such as only serves to prove, that the principal object of this Epistle of St. John was understood in the primitive church, to be the confutation of the Cerinthian Gnostics; the sect which divided Christ into two persons, of which they made Jesus a mere man; differing in this essentially from the *Docetæ*, who made the body of the man Jesus a mere phantom.

* "——— I think I have shown that the apostle Paul often "reasons inconclusively." — Dr. P., Hist. of Corrupt. vol. ii. p. 370.

† Lib. vii. c. 32.

6. And this view of St. John's Epistle receives a further confirmation from the genuine epistles of Ignatius. In these the error of the *Docetæ*, which Dr. Priestley supposes to be the sole object of St. John's Epistle, is indeed particularly censured. But lest, in asserting the truth of our Lord's humanity, he should be understood to support the opinion of his mere humanity, the holy Father hardly ever mentions Christ, without introducing some explicit assertion of his Divinity, or without joining with the name of Christ some epithet in which it is implied.

7. The mention of Ignatius having occurred, it were unpardonable not to suggest to the recollection of this learned assembly, one passage in particular in the epistle to the Magnesians, in which the eternal existence of the Word, as a distinct person from the Father, is asserted in terms which, though highly figurative, are perfectly unequivocal. "There is one God who hath manifested himself "through Jesus Christ his Son, who is his eternal "Word, who came not forth from silence."* The

* Εις θεος εστιν ὁ φανερωσας ἑαυτον δια Ιησυ Χριστυ του υιυ αὐτυ, ὁς ἐστιν αὐτυ λογος ἀιδιος, ὐκ ἀπο σιγης προελθων. — Ign. ad Magn. § 8.

name of the Logos led the early fathers to conceive the generation of the Son as an utterance; or at least to speak of it under that figure: as, on the contrary, the heretics who denied the eternity of the Son, described the period preceding his generation as a time of silence.* Under that figure Ignatius speaks of the generation of the Son in this passage; and he affirms, that no period of silence had preceded the utterance of the eternal Word. Or if it should seem more reasonable to suppose an allusion, in these expressions of Ignatius, to the *Sige* of the Gnostics, the consort of their *Buthos*, upon whom the Æons were engendered; and to understand the holy father as maintaining the immediate connection of the Father and the Son, unbroken by the intervention of any such intermediate intelligences, as the impious Theogony of the Gnostics interposed; still the Eternity of the Son is asserted. For the passage, in this view of it, amounts to this disjunctive proposition: "The "Son's existence holds not of the Father's by any "such remote relation as these fabulous genealogies

* So Marcellus of Ancyra: — Προ γαρ της δημιουργιας απασης, ησυχια τις ην, ως εικος, εν τω Θεω τω Λογω ουσας. — Euseb. contra Marcell. p. 89.

"describe; but he is the eternal Logos of the "Paternal Mind." According to either interpretation, the passage contains an evident assertion of the Divinity of the Son of God. And this assertion being found in the writings of Ignatius, the familiar friend and companion of the Apostles, who suffered martyrdom so early as in the sixteenth year of the second century, and had been appointed to the bishopric of Antioch full thirty years before, it is an unanswerable confutation of our author's confident assertions, that "we find nothing like divinity "ascribed to Jesus Christ before Justin Martyr*," and "That all the early fathers speak of Christ as "not having existed always."†

8. We have seen the sort and fashion of the argument which, in proof of his first assertion, Dr. Priestley builds on Holy Writ. Let us take a view of those which he hath drawn from other writers.

9. One principal argument, "that the primitive "church of Jerusalem was properly Unitarian,"

* Hist. of Corrupt. vol. i. p. 32.
† Ibid. p. 42.

maintaining the simple humanity of Christ, is this: —"Athanasius himself was so far from denying it," says Dr. Priestley, "that he endeavours to ac-"count for it, by saying, *that all the Jews were* "*so firmly persuaded that their Messiah was to be* "*nothing more than a man like themselves, that the* "*Apostles were obliged to use great caution in* "*divulging the doctrine of the proper divinity of* "*Christ.*"* The latter clause of the sentence, which contains what Athanasius is supposed to have said, is marked with inverted commas; which should seem to intimate, that it is an exact translation of some passage in the holy father's writings; and the lower margin of Dr. Priestley's book refers to Athanasius's celebrated piece on the orthodoxy of his predecessor Dionysius. Now in this piece upon the orthodoxy of Dionysius, Athanasius no where, I confess, denies that the primitive church of Jerusalem was Unitarian. Nor, on the other hand, do I recollect, that Dr. Priestley hath asserted it, in any part of his History of Electricity. The truth is that in either of these valuable works, the faith of the primitive church

* Hist. of Corrupt. vol. i. p. 12.

of Jerusalem never comes in question. In the defence of Dionysius not a single passage is to be found, which may be fairly understood as a tacit confession, that the primitive faith of the church of Jerusalem was Unitarian: much less is there any attempt to account for its supposed heterodoxy. Athanasius says indeed of the Jews of the apostolic age, that is, of the unbelieving Jews (for Athanasius is a writer who calls things by their names, and when he speaks of Jews, means not, as Dr. Priestley would persuade us*, Jewish Christians, except when he sarcastically gives the Arians the name of Jews, as resembling the Jews, in his judgment, in an obstinate denial of the Lord who bought them; but otherwise when he speaks his usual, plain, unfigured language, the unconverted Jews of the apostolic age are they, of whom he says) that they had so little insight into the true meaning of the prophecies, as to look for nothing more than a MAN in the promised Messiah. He says, that this error of the Jews had been the means of spreading the like mistake among the Gentiles; meaning probably the Proselytes of the

* Hist. of Corrupt., vol. ii. p. 486.

Gate; who, acknowledging in some degree the divinity of the Jewish scriptures, looked for the completion of the prophecies, and were the first Gentiles to whom the preaching of the apostles was addressed. These Gentiles, with something of the Jewish faith, it may easily be supposed, had imbibed many of the Jewish errors; and among others, as Athanasius imagines, the expectation of a Messiah of mortal extraction. This general mistake, he says, made it necessary, that the apostles, in their first public sermons, should insist largely on the miracles of our Saviour's life on earth, before they entered into a detail of the particulars of the Gospel doctrine, or explained what sort of person the promised Messiah was to be, and Jesus was. For their doctrine upon that article was not likely to meet with credit, till their divine commission to teach it was acknowledged, and their Master's general claim to the character of the Messiah, whatever that might be, previously admitted. The example of the apostles' practice in this particular is alleged, to show what prudence requires of every preacher of the Gospel; who must allow himself to be determined in the arrangement of his matter, the choice of his topics, and the

composition of his language, by the degree of previous knowledge, and the state of opinions, which may actually obtain among those to whom his instructions are addressed. What the ignorant will most easily apprehend must be first taught; those points, which are supposed to be most generally misunderstood, must be most particularly explained; and the truth must be conveyed in that language, which may the most evidently show its disagreement with any false opinion, to which the hearer may be particularly addicted. Athanasius contends, that upon these principles Dionysius was to be justified, if he dwelt more on the topic of our Lord's humiliation, than on that of his divinity; the Sabellian heresy being the error with which Dionysius was engaged. The consideration that the Son became man, afforded the most obvious proof that he was not the Father: and the Sabellians were to be convinced that the Word was made flesh, gross, corruptible flesh, before they could be brought to acknowledge that he was God of God. Athanasius shows, that, in the controversy with these heretics, Dionysius was inevitably led to the use of expressions, which the Arian party interpreted in their own favour; though

Dionysius always disclaimed the sense to which his words were wrested. He contends, that to tax Dionysius with a propensity to the Arian party, on account of these expressions, were no less unreasonable and injurious than it would be to entertain the like suspicion of the apostles themselves, because they had found it necessary to persuade the Jews that Jesus had been approved of God by signs and wonders as a man, before they could hope to persuade them that he was so much more than man, that his being found in fashion as a man was really the most extraordinary part of his history and character. It is in no other way than this, that Athanasius speaks of the apostles as teaching the Jews the humanity of Christ. The holy Father never speaks of any caution which they used in divulging the doctrine of his full divinity; unless an historian's distribution of the matter of his narrative, or a master's accommodation of his lessons to the previous attainments of his pupils, is to be called a caution of divulging what, in the natural order of tradition, is to be the last disclosed. Was it ever said of Livy, that he relates the tragedy of Lucretia's death from a caution of divulging the expulsion of the Tarquins? Of Porphyry, that he

treats of the five words from a caution of divulging the doctrine of the Categories? The beginning of every story must be first told. The easiest part of every science must be first taught. Of the great ability and judgment with which the apostles conducted the first preaching of the Gospel; of their happy art in the perspicuous arrangement of their lofty argument; with what readiness they led their catechumens on, from the simplest principles to the highest mysteries; of this consummate ability of the apostles in the capacity of teachers, Athanasius speaks with due commendation. Their caution he never mentions. On the contrary, the rapid progress of their instruction, how they passed at once from the detail of our Lord's life on earth, to the mystery of his Godhead, is one principal branch of his encomium. I wish that Dr. Priestley had produced the passage, in which he thinks the apostles are taxed with caution, and of which he certainly imagines (he would not otherwise have led his reader to imagine) he hath given an exact translation.*

* See the passage produced and critically examined in the Fourth of Dr. Priestley's First Letters to me, the Eleventh of my Letters in reply, and the Tenth of Dr. Priestley's Second

10. Nearly allied to this argument from Athanasius's omission to *deny*, is another from Epiphanius's omission to *assert*. "Epiphanius, in his "account of the Nazarenes, makes no mention "of any of them believing the divinity of Christ "in any sense of the word."* It is granted. Epiphanius, in his account of these ancient heretics†, makes indeed no mention, that they believed the divinity of Christ in any sense of the word. But what is this *no-mention* which Epiphanius makes, and of what importance is it to our author's system? It is only that Epiphanius confesses, that he had no certain information what the opinion of the Nazarenes might be upon this article. He had described them in general as a sect half Jew and half Christian: not Jews, because they had something of a belief in Christ: not Christians, because they lived in bondage to the ritual law. "But concerning Christ," he says, "I cannot say whether they think him a mere "man; or affirm, as the truth is, that he was

Letters, and in my Remarks upon Dr. Priestley's Second Letters, part ii. chap. i. § 11.

* Hist. of Corrupt., vol. i. p. 8.

† Hæres. 29.

"begotten of Mary by the Holy Ghost."* It is thus, and thus only, that Epiphanius *makes no mention* of the belief of the Nazarenes in Christ's divinity; but he equally makes no mention of their disbelief. And had it been Dr. Priestley's point to prove, that the Nazarenes held the Nicene faith upon the subject of the Trinity, he might have alleged, with equal fairness and propriety, Epiphanius's no-mention of their heterodoxy.

11. Indeed, that they were believers in our Lord's divinity were the fairer conclusion from the neutrality of Epiphanius's evidence. It was little the temper of the age in which Epiphanius lived, it was little the temper of Epiphanius, to think or to speak favourably of those who were deemed heretics. It was rather the practice to aggravate and to multiply their errors, and to vilify their characters: to charge them upon the slightest grounds with every enormity both in faith and practice. It is very unlikely that Epiphanius would have been so tender of the reputation of these Nazarenes, as

* Περι Χριστου δε, εκ οιδα ειπειν, ει και αυτοι τη των προειρημενων περι Κηρινθον και Μηρινθον μοχθηρια αχθονται, ψιλον ανθρωπον νομιζουσιν· η, καθως η αληθεια εχει, δια πνευματος αγιου γεγεννησθαι εκ Μαριας διαβεβαιουνται.

to confess his want of information about their opinions of the nature of Christ, had there been the least ground to suspect, or had there been so much as a suspicion current in his times, although it had been founded only on a general bad opinion of the sect, that they were heretical in this article. A general clamour, or the bare assertion of an earlier writer, would have fixed the imputation, without any nice enquiry into the evidence by which the charge might be supported. And since Epiphanius confesses, that he had no ground to say, that these Nazarenes held Christ to be a mere man; the presumption is, that he ought to have said, that they affirmed, as the truth is, that he was begotten of Mary by the Holy Ghost. But to affirm, as the truth is, that he was begotten of Mary by the Holy Ghost, in Epiphanius's sense of those words, was a full confession of his divinity. So that if the opinions of these Nazarenes be of any importance for ascertaining the primitive faith, and conjectures are to be drawn, concerning their opinions, from Epiphanius's profession of his want of information, the fair conjecture is the opposite of Dr. Priestley's; namely, that the Nazarenes homologated with the church; with the church,

as its opinions stood in the age of Epiphanius, when I suppose he will allow it to have been far gone from the primitive purity of his Unitarian faith; with this corrupt church, as Dr. Priestley deems it, his friends the Nazarenes homologated upon the article of Christ's divinity.

12. But, after all, of what importance is the opinion of these Nazarenes? Or how may the catholic tradition be affected by the singularities of a sect? Of a sect which lay under the censure of the church as heretical? Attend, my Reverend Brethren. It is in this that we have been so long, I believe I ought to add, so fatally mistaken. The Nazarenes were never censured! They were no sectaries! They were the very first, and because the first, they were the purest, the very best of Christians! Nazarene was the ancient name of the Jewish Christians!* Of the first members of the primitive church of Jerusalem, that original, parent church, the mother of us all; where James the brother of our Lord was bishop! In the opinions, therefore, of these Nazarenes, we have the opinions

* —— the Nazarenes (and the Jewish Christians never went by any other name.)— Hist. of Corrupt., vol. i. p. 8.

of those first Christians, who received, not only the baptismal ablution, but the illumination of the Spirit, at the hands of the apostles! You seem to ask me, by what evidence this important discovery is confirmed? By no evidence. The thing is not proved. It is asserted. In philosophical subjects Dr. Priestley would be the last to reason from principles assumed without proof; but in divinity and ecclesiastical history he expects that his own assertion, or that of writers of his own persuasion, however uninformed or prejudiced, should pass with the whole Christian world for proof of the boldest assumptions. The Nazarenes, it is confessed, were the progeny of the first Christians of the church of Jerusalem. But the name of Nazarene, you will bear me witness, was never heard of in the Christian church, as descriptive of the Jewish Christians, before their settlement in the northern parts of Galilee, upon the banishment of the Jews from Jerusalem, in the reign of Adrian.* *The Hebrews*, and *they of the circumcision*, were the earlier names, by which the Jewish converts, who formed the church of Jerusalem, had been distinguished from the Christians of

* See the last paragraph of the sixth of my *Letters in Reply*, and the seventh of those Letters, § 5.

the Gentiles. Their descendants, the Nazarenes, were at first, perhaps, heretical but in a single article; in maintaining the necessity of the observance of the Mosaic law for the attainment of salvation under the Gospel: whereas their ancestors had, indeed, themselves adhered to their old law, but had declared against the absurdity of exacting a submission to the ceremonial part of it from the Gentile converts. By degrees, however, these Nazarenes declined so far from the pure faith of that first race of Christians, from which they boasted their descent, that in Jerome's time they were become heretical in that degree, that Jerome considered them as a Jewish sect rather than a Christian. "To this day," says Jerome, "a heresy "prevails among the Jews in all the synagogues "of the east, which is called that of the Minæi, "who commonly go by the name of Nazarenes: "who believe in Christ, the Son of God, born of "the Virgin; and say that he was the person who "suffered under Pontius Pilate, and rose again; "in whom we ourselves believe. But from a desire "of being Jews and Christians both at once, they "are neither Jews nor Christians."*

* Epist. ad Augustinum de dissidio Petri et Pauli. Tom. iii. fol. 155. B. edit. Froben.

13. It is rather for the sake of general truth, than for the attainment of victory in the present argument, that I am desirous to maintain the distinction which was ever made, till Zuicker attempted to confound it, between the primitive church of Jerusalem, and the sect of the Nazarenes, its heretical offspring. In the trinitarian controversy the distinction is of little importance. Or, rather, it would be of advantage to the argument of the orthodox party, if our faith needed other support, than that which the plain sense of the Scriptures and the whole tenour of ecclesiastical history supply; it would be of singular advantage to our argument, that Dr. Priestley should be able to establish Zuicker's extravagant position, that these Nazarenes were no other than the original members of the Hebrew church. Whoever they were, their orthodoxy, in the article of our Lord's divinity, is notorious. It is attested by most of the writers of antiquity that mention them. It is acknowledged by Jerome, at the very same time that he taxes them with the grossest heresy in other points. And were no express testimony to be produced, still it would be the fair and probable conclusion, from that very passage of Epiphanius,

upon which Dr. Priestley would build the contrary opinion. If, therefore, it could be proved, that these Nazarenes really were, what Dr. Priestley hath been taught by Zuicker to believe, the first converts of the circumcision; we who maintain the full divinity of Christ, should find, in the confession of the Nazarenes, the verdict of those first Christians in our favour. But since the fact is, that they were an heretical sect, which arose in the second century from the ashes of the church of Jerusalem*: their opinions upon any article are totally insignificant, and can in no way affect the catholic tradition. Still, therefore, the modern Unitarian would serve his own cause but ill, who should be able to succeed in the attempt to prove, that the mere humanity of Christ was a tenet of the Nazarenes.

14. The neutrality of Epiphanius's evidence is, however, not the whole of the proof by which our modern historian hath taken the pains to support an assertion so little to his purpose. It is alleged only to corroborate a more direct proof, which is

* See Letters in Reply, VI. and VII.

very proper to be produced as another specimen of the sort of argument upon which our author's first proposition rests.

15. The Nazarenes, and the Ebionites, he tells us, were the same people, and held the same tenets.* By the appellation of Ebionites, it is confessed, a certain sect, which denied the divinity of our Saviour, was originally distinguished. But how is it proved that these Ebionites were the same with the Nazarenes? By a pretended acknowledgment of Origen and Epiphanius.† It is of great importance for a just apprehension of the exact force of any writer's arguments, to catch the idioms of his style: and an attention to this circumstance must be particularly recommended to Dr. Priestley's readers. One of the most striking peculiarities of his language is a very singular use of the words *acknowledge*, and *acknowledgment*. Acknowledgment, in the usual acceptation of the word in controversial writing, signifies a writer's

* Hist. of Corrupt., vol. i. p. 7.

† —— both Origen and Epiphanius acknowledge that the Nazarenes and Ebionites were the same people, and held the same tenets. Hist of Corrupt., vol. i. p. 7.

avowal of a principle or a fact, which, as making for his adversary's argument, it might have been for his purpose to conceal or to deny, but that the evidence of the thing extorted the confession. But with Dr. Priestley, any expressions, which are capable of being drawn, by construction and refinement, to a sense that may seem but indirectly favourable to his own notions, are an explicit *acknowledgment* of the writer who uses them, that things actually were as Dr. Priestley is inclined to represent them. If such expressions of one writer are quoted by another, they amount to an acknowledgment to the same purpose on the part of the writer who makes the quotation. On the other hand, the acknowledgment of an original writer may sometimes be inferred from a negligent citation. Hath Eusebius, complaining of a total disregard to truth among the sectaries who denied our Lord's divinity, appealed, in confirmation of the charge, to a writer of the second century; who alleges it against the Unitarians of his own time, as an instance of the most hardened effrontery, that they had the audacity to assert, that their tenets had been originally taught by the apostles, and were maintained by all the

Roman bishops in succession to the time of Victor?* This heavy accusation, thus supported by the testimony of an earlier writer, is a plain *acknowledgment* † on the part of Eusebius, that the Unitarians constantly claimed this high antiquity of their doctrine. And what may seem more paradoxical, this writer's appeal to "certain "psalms and odes, the compositions of faithful "brethren in the first age, which celebrate the "divinity of the Christ the word of God‡," is only a proof of Eusebius's inability to confute the claim, which, by his own acknowledgment, was set up. ‖ Hath the learned Dr. Samuel Clarke, in an inaccurate citation of a passage in Origen, made Origen speak of the Unitarians of his time as pious

* Euseb. Hist. Eccl. lib. v. c. 28.

† "It is *acknowledged* by Eusebius and others, that the "ancient Unitarians themselves constantly asserted, that their "doctrine was the universal opinion of the Christian church "till the time of Victor." — Hist. of Corrupt., vol. ii. p. 486. Compare vol. i. p. 18, 19.

‡ Ψαλμοι δε οσοι και ωδαι αδελφων, απ' αρχης υπο πιστων γραφεισαι, τον λογον τε θεε τον Χριστον υμνουσι θεολογουντες. Euseb. Hist. Eccl. lib. v. c. 28. Compare Ephes. v. 19. Col. iii. 16. James v. 13.

‖ ——— in refuting their pretensions to antiquity, he goes no farther back than Irenæus and Justin Martyr. — Hist. of Corrupt., vol. i. p. 19.

persons? This is a candid acknowledgment*, on the part of Origen, of the piety of those sectaries: whereas Origen says, not that they were pious, but that they boasted† that they were pious, or affected piety. Piety, and the affectation of piety, belong to opposite characters. According to this enlarged use of the word *acknowledgment*, it will indeed be very hazardous to deny but that an acknowledgment to any purpose may be found in any writer, or be drawn from any words. It is necessary therefore to declare, that it is only in the usual meaning of the word that I take upon me to aver, that no acknowledgment of the supposed identity of the Nazarenes and the Ebionites is to be found either in Origen or Epiphanius.‡ Origen says, indeed, of the Jewish Christians of his own time, that they were Ebionites§: not meaning to make any acknowledgment in favour of the proper Ebionites, as no worse heretics than the Nazarenes; but rather to stigmatise the Nazarenes with an opprobrious appellation. And the only conclusion

* Origen candidly calls these adherents to the strict unity God pious persons. — Hist. of Corrupt. vol. i. p. 57.

† —— πολλες φιλοθεως εἶναι εὐχομενες ——

‡ See Appendix. § Contra Cels. lib. 2.

which is to be drawn from this passage of Origen is, that the word Ebionite had in his time outgrown its original meaning; which it easily might do; inasmuch as, by its derivation, it is not naturally descriptive of any particular set of opinions, but barely expressive of the contempt in which those who bestowed it held the knowledge and understanding of the party on which it was bestowed. It was therefore likely to be variously applied at different times, according as one or another folly incurred the contempt either of any particular writer, or of the age in which he flourished. Accordingly, it appears, from ecclesiastical history, that the use of it was various and indefinite. Sometimes it was the peculiar name of those sects, which denied both the divinity of our Lord and his miraculous conception. Then its meaning was extended to take in another party; which, admitting the miraculous conception of Jesus, still denied his divinity, and questioned his previous existence. And at last it seems the Nazarenes, whose error was rather a superstitious severity in their practice than any deficiency in their faith, were included by Origen in the infamy of the appellation. It was natural indeed for Origen, fond as he was of

mystic interpretations of the Jewish Scriptures, and possessed with the imagination that every particular of the ritual service, and every occurrence in the Jewish story, was typical of something in the gospel dispensation,—it was natural for Origen to think meanly of a sect, who held the observance of the letter of the ceremonial law to be an essential part of a Christian's duty. They certainly had little apprehension of the free spirit of the religion they professed; and this with Origen would be the surest mark of a low and beggarly understanding. It is in this reproachful appellation, which he alone of all the writers of antiquity hath bestowed upon the Nazarenes, that Dr. Priestley hath discovered his acknowledgment in favour of the Ebionites. For Epiphanius, who is joined with Origen in this acknowledgment, he describes the Nazarenes and the Ebionites as different sects, maintaining different opinions, except that they agreed in retaining more or less of the Mosaic service.*

* See this twofold question, concerning the faith of the Nazarenes, and the distinction between the Nazarenes and Ebionites, largely discussed in the second of Dr. Priestley's Letters to me, the sixth and seventh of my Letters in reply, the third of Dr. Priestley's Second Letters, and my Remarks on his Second Letters, part ii. chap. ii. and iii.

16. Among other specimens of our author's happy art of turning every thing, by a dexterous interpretation, to his own purpose, it were injustice to the injured memory of Eusebius not to mention the attempt that is made to shake the credit of his history, by representing the unfairness with which that candid writer is supposed to treat the Unitarians; when he says, "that Theodotus, who "appeared about the year 190, was the first who "held that our Saviour was a mere man; when, in "refuting their pretensions to antiquity, he goes "no further back than to Irenæus and Justin "Martyr, though in his own writings alone he "might have found a refutation of his assertion." * It must be confessed, that any one who should assert that Theodotus was the first who taught a doctrine which sunk our Lord into the rank of mere man, might easily be confuted from the ecclesiastical history of Eusebius; in which the Cerinthians and the Ebionites, who are taxed by all antiquity with that impiety, are referred to an earlier period. The truth, however, seems to be, that the doctrine of our Lord's humanity, like all corruptions, had its stages; that it was carried by

* Hist. of Corrup., vol. i. p. 19.

degrees to the height which it at last attained; and that Theodotus, in this article, so far surpassed the earlier heresiarchs, that the merit of being the inventor of the mere humanity, in the precise and full meaning of the words, is with great propriety and truth ascribed to him. When the Cerinthians and the Ebionites affirmed that Jesus had no existence previous to Mary's conception, and that he was literally and physically the Carpenter's Son; it might justly be said of them, that they asserted the mere humanity of the Redeemer: especially as it could not be foreseen, that the impiety would ever go a greater length than this, of ascribing to him an origin merely human. These heretics, however, went no further, as I conceive, than to deny our Lord's original divinity: they admitted I know not what unintelligible exaltation of his nature *, which took place, as they conceived, upon his ascension, by which he became no less the object of worship, than if his nature had been originally divine. But when a more daring (though, I confess, a far more consistent) sect arose,—denying that our Lord in glory is more

* See the fourteenth of my Letters in Reply, § 5.

than a mortal man, raised, as all the just will one day be, to immortality; or that he is more the object of adoration than Enoch or Elijah,—these younger heretics eclipsed the glory of their timid ancestors, and might justly claim the honour of being the first assertors of the mere humanity of Christ; for they were indeed the first who made humanity the whole of his condition. It was undoubtedly in this exalted sense that the humanity of Christ was taught by Theodotus. For nothing short of this might serve his purpose; which, as we learn from Epiphanius, was to extenuate the guilt of a renunciation of his faith, which he had made under the terrors of persecution, by setting up a plea, that, in renouncing Christ, he had not renounced his God, but a man. This plea could be of no service to Theodotus's cause, unless Christ were a man, not only in his origin, but at the time when Theodotus renounced him. It was therefore that sublime doctrine, which is at this day taught in the conventicles* of Dr.

* That the assemblies held by Mr. Lindsey in Essex-street, and by Dr. Priestley at Birmingham, are strictly CONVENTICLES, in the genuine forensic meaning of the word, see proved in the seventeenth of my Letters in Reply, § 8.; and my Remarks on Dr. Priestley's Second Letters, part ii. chap. iv. § 6.

Priestley and Mr. Lindsey, the doctrine of our Lord's mere undeified humanity, which Theodotus, the learned tanner of Byzantium, a deserter of his Lord, and a fugitive from his country, broached at Rome in the end of the second century. This doctrine Dr. Priestley will perhaps find it difficult to trace to any earlier period, or to any more respectable origin. No injury, therefore, is done to the Unitarian cause, when Theodotus is said to be the first author of the Unitarian doctrine in this exalted, finished, form. But after all, this is not, what Dr. Priestley imagines it to be, the assertion of Eusebius. It is the assertion of a writer cited by Eusebius without any name. It should seem that he was of the Latin church, and that his expressions are to be understood with particular reference to the state of religion in the western world, especially at Rome. Now it was probably true, that Theodotus was the very first who at Rome, in any sense, taught the mere humanity of

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And that Dr. Priestley is, by his principles, disqualified to be the pastor of any thing better than a Conventicle, see proved by his own confession in the seventeenth of his Second Letters to me.

Christ. For notwithstanding the corrupt state of the Roman church in later ages, it is notorious that she was the last of all infected with any gross heresy. As for the pretensions of the Unitarians, which it might be incumbent upon Eusebius to refute, they were not simply pretensions to antiquity. The antiquity of the Unitarian doctrine, in a certain form, is confessed. Its antiquity is proved by the express censure which is passed upon it in St. John's writings, both in his First Epistle and in his Gospel, as a dangerous error, which was in being when he wrote. But the pretensions of the Unitarians, which Eusebius contradicts, were pretensions to a *prior* antiquity,—the pretence that their own doctrine was original; and the doctrine of the church, in the time of Zephyrinus, novel. And, in refuting these pretensions, the writer quoted by Eusebius goes back to the apostolic age: he goes back to those psalms and odes, which seem to be alluded to in the Apostolic Epistles, and to the books of Holy Writ.*

* See this question about Theodotus pursued in the eighth of Dr. Priestley's First Letters to me, the postscript,' § 4., and the fourteenth of my Letters in Reply.

II.

1. By these specimens a judgment may be formed of the arguments and of the facts by which our author's first assumption is supported. By exposing the weakness of our author's arguments, and by the proof which hath been produced from the writings of Ignatius, that the divinity of the Son, his full divinity, was acknowledged by the immediate disciples of the Apostles, (a proof which, had not the work been long since done by the learned Bishop Bull, might have been strengthened with a copious collection of passages to the same purpose from Ignatius, Barnabas, Clemens Romanus, Hermas, and the authentic acts of the Martyrdom of Polycarp,) by the detection of the fallacy of the arguments on the one side, and by the positive proof adduced on the other: our author's notion of the faith of the first Christians, that it was purely Unitarian, is overturned. And if this notion of the first Christians be overturned, the assertion, that the doctrine of our Lord's divinity was an invention of the second race, falls with it. For what was believed by the first race, could be no invention of the second.

Nor can any argument be drawn, from any resemblance that may be imagined between the Trinity of the Christian church, and the three principles of the Platonists, that the doctrine of the Apostles was not rightly understood by their first converts: unless indeed it could be proved (which is the tacit assumption upon which this objection is founded) that the discoveries of Revelation and the investigations of philosophy may never coincide. But why is it supposed that nothing can be a part of an inspired teacher's doctrine, which had been taught before by wise men, who were not inspired? Were every iota of the gospel doctrine to be found in the writings of the Greek philosophers, this would not be sufficient to set aside the pretensions of the first preachers of Christianity to a divine commission. The just conclusion from so perfect an agreement would only be, that, for the great importance of these doctrines to the manners of mankind, it had pleased God to make discoveries to all men by Revelation, to which a few only could attain by abstract reasoning. The case, indeed, is far otherwise. It is ever to be remembered, for the mortification of man's pride, and to the praise of God's

mercy, that "when the world by wisdom knew "not God," when philosophy had made its utmost efforts, not entirely without success, but with little general advantage, "it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching," — by a method of instruction which, in the article of religious information, hath abolished the distinction between the philosopher and the idiot,—"to save them that believe." But had our supposed case actually obtained, — had Revelation discovered nothing more to all than reason had previously taught a few; still to teach all and to teach a few is so different a business, that the previous attainments of philosophers would have afforded no objection against the pretensions of the first preachers of the Gospel, sufficient to overturn the evidence by which their claim to a divine commission is supported. Much less may a resemblance, more or less exact, between faith and philosophy, in single articles, create a presumption, that those articles of faith, of which certain philosophical opinions seem to carry a resemblance, made no part of the doctrine which those inspired teachers taught. The resemblance may seem indeed a wonderful fact, which may justly draw the attention of the serious and inqui-

sitive. And if it should be deemed incredible, as well it may, that reason, in her utmost strength, should ever ascend so high as to attain even to a distant glimpse of truths, which have ever been esteemed the most mysterious discoveries of Revelation: it will become a question of the highest curiosity and importance, to determine by what means the Platonic school came by those notions of the Godhead, which, had they been of later date than the commencement of Christianity, might have passed for a very mild corruption of the Christian faith; but being in truth much older, have all the appearance of a near, though very imperfect, view of the doctrine which was afterwards current in the Christian church.

2. The enquiry becomes more important, when it is discovered, that these notions were by no means peculiar to the Platonic school: that the Platonists pretended to be no more than the expositors of a more ancient doctrine, which is traced from Plato to Parmenides; from Parmenides to his masters of the Pythagorean sect; from the Pythagoreans to Orpheus, the earliest of the Grecian mystagogues; from Orpheus to the secret lore of the Egyptian

priests, in which the foundations of the Orphic theology were laid. Similar notions of a triple principle prevailed in the Persian and Chaldean theology; and vestiges even of the worship of a Trinity were discernible in the Roman superstition in a very late age. This worship the Romans had received from their Trojan ancestors. For the Trojans brought it with them into Italy from Phrygia. In Phrygia it was introduced by Dardanus so early as in the ninth century after Noah's flood. Dardanus carried it with him from Samothrace; where the personages, that were the objects of it, were worshipped under the Hebrew name of the Cabirim. Who these Cabirim might be, has been matter of unsuccessful enquiry to many learned men. The utmost that is known with certainty is, that they were originally Three, and were called, by way of eminence, the Great or Mighty Ones; for that is the import of the Hebrew name. And of the like import is their Latin appellation, *Penates. Dii per quos penitùs spiramus, per quos habemus corpus, per quos rationem animi possidemus.** *Dii qui sunt intrinsecùs, atque in intimis penetralibus cœli.*† Thus

* Macrob. Saturnal. lib. iii. c. 4.

† Varro, apud Arnob. lib. iii. p. 123. Lugd. Bat. 1651.

the joint worship of Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva, the Triad of the Roman Capitol, is traced to that of the THREE MIGHTY ONES in Samothrace*; which was established in that island, at what precise time it is impossible to determine, but earlier, if Eusebius may be credited, than the days of Abraham.

3. The notion therefore of a Trinity, more or less removed from the purity of the Christian faith, is found to have been a leading principle in all the ancient-schools of philosophy, and in the religions of almost all nations; and traces of an early popular belief of it appear even in the abominable rites of idolatrous worship. If reason was insufficient for this great discovery, what could be the means of information, but what the Platonists themselves assign, Θεοπαραδοτος Θεολογια, "a theology deliver-"ed from the gods," i. e. a revelation? This is the account which Platonists, who were no Christians, have given of the origin of their master's doctrine. But from what revelation could they

* —— "Tarquinius Demarati Corinthii filius,—*Samothraciis mystice imbutus*, uno templo ac sub eodem tecto, numina memorata conjungit." Macrob. Saturnal. lib. iii. c. 4.

derive their information, who lived before the Christian, and had no light from the Mosaic? For, whatever some of the early fathers may have imagined, there is no evidence that Plato or Pythagoras were at all acquainted with the Mosaic writings; not to insist, that the worship of a Trinity is traced to an earlier age than that of Plato or of Pythagoras, or even of Moses. Their information could be only drawn from traditions founded upon earlier revelations; from scattered fragments of the ancient Patriarchal creed,—that creed which was universal before the defection of the first idolaters; which the corruptions of idolatry, gross and enormous as they were, could never totally obliterate.* Thus the doctrine of the Trinity is rather confirmed than discredited by the suffrage of the heathen sages: since the resemblance of the Christian faith and the Pagan philosophy in this article, when fairly interpreted, appears to be nothing less than the consent of the latest and the earliest revelations.

* —— "What Socrates said of him, what Plato writ, and "the rest of the heathen philosophers of several nations, is "all no more than the twilight of Revelation, after the sun of "it was set in the race of Noah."—Dryden's Preface to *Religio Laici*.

III.

1. Our author's assumption, that the doctrine of our Lord's divinity was an innovation of the Platonic Christians of the second century, being overthrown by direct proof, that this pretended innovation was a part of the faith of the first Christians; all oblique and secondary arguments, that might otherwise create a presumption in our author's favour, are rendered wholly insignificant. To Dr. Priestley it seems a circumstance of great importance, that these early writers "sometimes "drop the personification of the Logos, (which in "his opinion had been their first step towards the "deification of our Saviour*,) and speak of it as "the mere attribute of God." † This he imputes to the difficulty with which new opinions lay hold upon the mind, and to the natural prevalency of good sense, which is such that it will in all cases often get the better of imagination. ‡ Facts themselves should be established, before consequences are deduced from them. Let us therefore consider the example by which this assertion is supported.

* Hist. of Corrupt., part i. sect. 2.
† Ibid. vol. i. p. 35. ‡ Ibid.

2. Theophilus of Antioch says, "that when "God said, *Let us make man*, he spake to nothing "but his own Logos, or Wisdom." * It must be confessed, that the example is happily chosen. It is clear that, in this passage of Theophilus, as it is expressed in Dr. Priestley's translation, the Logos is described as *nothing but* the Wisdom of God — nothing but *His Own* Wisdom. His own Wisdom must be that internal Wisdom, which is a power of his own Mind, a property of his own Person: and to say that God spake to "nothing but his own "Wisdom," is to say, that he spake to no one but himself. Dr. Priestley, methinks, hath spared to make the use he might have done of this passage of Theophilus; which seems not only to be an instance in which Theophilus drops the personification of the Logos in his own writings; but to prove that, as far as the interpretation of the Old Testament is of any importance, the authority of this learned and ancient bishop of Antioch stands with the Unitarian scheme. This learned bishop tells us, that the writers of the Old Testament, if ever they seem to allude to a plurality of persons

* Hist. of Corrupt., vol. i. p. 35.

in the Godhead, speak figuratively, and are to be understood accordingly. The allusion is perhaps no where stronger, than in those words of Moses, in the Book of Genesis, " God said, Let us make." God not only speaks; " God said:" but God speaks in the plural number; " Let us make:" as though persons were addressed who were to take part with the speaker in the business to be done. Theophilus, the celebrated bishop of Antioch, — Theophilus so respectable for his antiquity, his piety, and his learning, — Theophilus cautions us, not to be over-confident of the consequences which we draw from this rigid exposition of the sacred writer's words. Theophilus affirms, that the expression is purely figurative; signifying only that, before man was made, the purpose of making him arose, and was contemplated, in the divine intellect. The expression describes an internal deliberation of the divine mind concerning the intended work; just as the private thoughts and purposes of a man are sometimes expressed under the figure of a discourse passing within himself. All this Theophilus affirms in Dr. Priestley's English. Nothing of this Theophilus affirms, speaking for himself in

his own language*: ουκ αλλῳ δε τινι ειρηκε, Ποιησωμεν, αλλ' η τῳ ἑαυτου Λογῳ, και τῃ ἑαυτου Σοφιᾳ. The "nothing but" of Dr. Priestley's English conveys quite another idea than the ουκ αλλῳ τινι αλλ' η of Theophilus's Greek. The Logos and the Wisdom, as different names of one thing, are connected by the disjunctive *Or*, in Dr. Priestley's English: as names of different things they are connected by the copulative *And*, [Και,] in Theophilus's Greek. The exact rendering of Theophilus's words is to this effect:—"It was to no other person" (that is the proper force of ουκ αλλῳ τινι, haud alii cuipiam,)—"It was to no other person that he said, *Let us* "*make*, than to his own Word, and to his own "Wisdom;" τῳ ἑαυτου Λογῳ και τῃ ἑαυτου Σοφιᾳ. The repetition of the demonstrative article with the pronoun, as well as the connection by the copulative, clearly shows that Λογος and Σοφια, the Word and the Wisdom, are different things. Hath Dr. Priestley written a history of the Corruptions of Christianity, and hath he yet to learn that, in the language of Theophilus, and of the best writers of his age, the Word and the Wisdom (Λογος and

* Ad Autolyc. p. 114. Oxon. 1684.

Σοφια) are used as proper names of the second and third persons of the Trinity? If his own reading in those early fathers hath been so confined, that not one of the clear unequivocal instances that occur in Theophilus himself, in Origen, in Tatian and Irenæus, hath ever fallen under his own proper observation, he might have been informed of this peculiarity of their style from the notes which accompany the text of Theophilus, in Bishop Fell's edition, printed at Oxford in 1684, which, as it is inserted in his catalogue* of *principal* editions, it is possible he may have seen. Theophilus's assertion, that God spake to no other person than his Word and his Wisdom, is an assertion that he spake to persons of no less dignity than the Son and the Holy Ghost. It is an assertion of the catholic exposition† of the text, and of the consequences deduced from it, in opposition to the Jewish expositors of that age; who contended that

* Dr. Priestley's Preface, p. xxii.

† That this is the true exposition,—that the text describes a consultation which passed between the persons of the Godhead,—is shown, with great brevity, but with the highest degree of evidence and perspicuity, in Dr. Kennicott's dissertation on the Tree of Life, p. 29, 30. — Compare the same dissertation, p. 71.

this speech of God was addressed to the angels. Theophilus therefore in this passage, hath not dropped the personification of the Logos; that is, he hath not receded from the assertion of the personality of the Word. He affirms not, that the Logos, so often mentioned by himself and other writers as a person, is no person, but merely the divine attribute of Wisdom; which, in the usual language of grammarians, were rather to assert the personification* than to drop it: but by the names of the Word and the Wisdom he distinguishes two different persons; saying, these were the persons to whom God spake.

IV.

1. We have seen by what sort of arguments our author's two first assertions, "that the faith of the "first age was Unitarian, and that the doctrine of "our Lord's divinity was an invention of the "second," are supported. If he hath succeeded no better in the proof of his third assertion, con-

* Of my misapprehension of the word *Personification*, as used by Dr. Priestley, and how little it affects my argument, see the thirteenth of my Letters in Reply, § 2—5.

cerning the Platonic Christians of the second age, the inventors, as he would have it, of our Lord's divinity,—that the divinity which they set up was only of that secondary sort which was admitted by the Arians, including neither eternity, nor any proper necessity of existence; having the mere name of divinity, without any thing of the real form: if the proof of this third assertion should be found to be equally infirm with that of the other two, his notion of the gradual progress of opinions, from the mere Unitarian doctrine to the Arian, and from the Arian doctrine to the Athanasian faith, must be deemed a mere dream or fiction in every part.

2. It must be acknowledged, that the first converts from the Platonic school took advantage of the resemblance between the Evangelic and the Platonic doctrine on the subject of the Godhead, to apply the principles of their old philosophy to the explication and the confirmation of the articles of their faith. They defended it by arguments drawn from Platonic principles; they even propounded it in Platonic language: which, to themselves and their contemporaries, was the most fa-

miliar and intelligible that could be employed upon so abstruse a subject. Nor was this practice to be condemned, so long as the Scriptures and the catholic traditions were made the test of truth; so long as Revelation was not pressed into the service of philosophy, by any accommodation of the pure evangelical doctrine to preconceived opinions; but philosophy was made to exert her powers in the defence of Revelation, and to lend her language to be the vehicle of its sacred truths. These might be deemed the most promising means that could be employed for bringing over more converts from the pagan schools. And the writers, who evangelized in this philosophical style, conceived, perhaps, that they had the sanction of an Apostle's example, "for becoming all things to all men, that they "might gain some."

3. But, whatever might be the purity of their intentions, they were guilty of an unpardonable deviation from the primitive faith, if it be true that they maintained the doctrine which Dr. Priestley ascribes to them; namely, that the Son is the mere contingent creature of the Father's will and power; a production which hath not always

existed.* We have seen that this was not the belief of the first age; and if it is to be found in the writings of the second, it could indeed be nothing better than a corruption of religion by philosophy.

4. To judge of the truth of a writer's proposition, and even to divine of what sort the arguments will be which he will allege in support of it, it is sometimes sufficient that the precise tenour of it be clearly understood. They were converts from Platonism, they were Christians, who, with their Christianity, are supposed to have retained their Platonism, to whom Dr. Priestley ascribes the notion of a Logos which had not always existed, but began to be, like other creatures, by an act of the Father's will. After all that Dr. Priestley hath written, about the resemblance between the Ecclesiastical and the Platonic Trinity; he hath yet, it seems, to learn, that a created Logos, a Logos which had ever not existed, was no less an absurdity in the Academy than it is an impiety in the church. The converts from Platonism must

* Hist. of Corrupt., vol. i. p. 42. 44. 62.

have renounced their philosophy, before they could be the authors of this absurd, this monstrous opinion.* As the notion that this doctrine took its rise with them, betrays a total ignorance of the genuine principles of their school; it is easy to foresee, that the arguments brought in support of it can only be founded in gross misconstructions of their language. That this is indeed the case, will be abundantly proved by a single instance.

5. Athenagoras is one of the writers to whom Dr. Priestley refers for a proof of his assertion. The passage which he cites, as affording a proof that Athenagoras believed not that Christ had always existed, or that the Logos had always existed, otherwise than as an attribute of the divine mind, happens to be one, in which that philosophic Father asserts the eternity of the Logos, as a distinct person, in the most explicit terms; and argues in support of it from a certain relation of the Logos to the paternal intellect, which the name, Logos, implies. "Athenagoras," says Dr. Priestley, "calls Christ the first production of the Father;

* See more upon this subject in the eighth of Dr. Priestley's First Letters to me, and the thirteenth of my Letters in Reply, § 8.

" but says, he was not always actually produced: " for that, from the beginning, God, being an " eternal mind, had reason in himself, being from " eternity rational."* But let us hear Athenagoras himself.† " If," says he, " endowed " as you are with superior understanding," (he addresses the emperors Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, and Lucius Aurelius Commodus,) " it should " occur to you to enquire, whence it is that he is " called a Son, I will explain it in a few words. " [It is] that he is to the Father [as] the first " offspring. Not as something made." (This is the true sense of the words, in which Dr. Priestley imagines that it is said that Christ was not always produced.) " Not as something made. For God, " being an eternal intelligence, himself from the " beginning had the Logos in himself, being " eternally rational." The learned father undertakes to explain to the philosophical emperors, why the second person in the ever-blessed Trinity is called the Son. He tells them, that this name is expressive of a certain relation, which the second person stands in to the first, who is called the

* Hist. of Corrupt., vol. i. p. 36.

† See the entire Greek passage, p. 237.

Father; which relation is that of the eldest born. But lest the relation of primogeniture should lead to the notion of a proper physical generation, which would sink the Son into the rank of a creature, (for generation is only a particular way in which certain things are made,) he says, that the birth or generation of the Son is not to be understood as if he were something that had been ever made, — as if his being had commenced, at any certain time, by the inducement of a form upon a pre-existing material. For that is the general notion of a making; although, in common speech, it is usual to say of those things only, that they are made, to which the form is given at once by the hand of the artist. When the form is gradually brought on by the plastic powers of nature, the secret process is called generation; which is therefore but a sort of making, and differs from that which is usually called a making, in the means only by which the end is compassed. Athenagoras therefore gives the emperors a caution, not to understand, by the generation of the Son, a generation in the literal sense of the word, which comes under the general notion of a making: not to understand by it any thing like that natural process, by which the bodies

of plants and animals, and some other substances, are carried forward from a potential to an actual existence. The generation of the Son cannot be understood, he says, of any such production, because his actual existence is from eternity. This, he says, is the necessary consequence of the confessed eternity of the Father. The Logos hath existed from eternity, in union with the Father; "because God, being eternally rational, ever had "the Logos in himself." The sense is, that the personal subsistence of a divine Logos is implied in the very idea of a God. And the argument rests on a principle which was common to all the Platonic fathers, and seems to be founded in Scripture, that the existence of the Son flows necessarily from the Divine Intellect exerted on itself; from the Father's contemplation of his own perfections. But as the Father ever was, his perfections have ever been, and his intellect hath been ever active. But, perfections which have ever been, the ever-active intellect must ever have contemplated; and the contemplation which hath ever been, must ever have been accompanied with its just effect, the personal existence of the Son. Athenagoras, having thus proved that the generation of the Son can be

only a figurative generation, proceeds to explain the figure, by assigning the particular transaction to which he conceives it to allude; which is no commencement of the Son's existence; not even that act of the paternal mind, in which the existence of the Son originates; but the going forth of the Son to exert his powers in the business of creation. "He is," says Athenagoras, "to the "Father as the first offspring: not as something "that was ever made; but that he went forth to "be idea and energy in material substances, which "lay yet in chaos, unqualified and undistinguished; "the dense promiscuously mingled with the rare, "waiting the operation of the active spirit to im-"pregnate them with form."* Here, indeed, the

* Ει δε, δι' υπερβολην συνεσεως, σκοπειν υμιν επεισιν, ο παις τι βουλεται· ερω δια βραχεων, πρωτον γεννημα ειναι τω πατρι· ουκ ως γενομενον· εξ αρχης γαρ ο Θεος, νους αιδιος ων, ειχεν αυτο; εν εαυτω τον λογον, αιδιως λογικος ων· αλλ' ως των υλικων συμπαντων αποιου φυσεως και γης αχειας υποκειμενων δικην, μεμιγμενων των παχυμερεστερων προς τα κουφοτερα, επ' αυτοις ιδεα και ενεργεια ειναι προελθων. There seems to be some corruption in the words και γης. A learned clergyman of the archdeaconry of St. Alban's conjectures that γης should be της. Nor can I devise any better emendation. The general sense of the passage cannot but be very clear to those to whom the imagery of the Platonists is in any degree familiar.

A passage of Hermes Trismegistus, preserved by Suidas and Cedrenus, and Malela, may somewhat illustrate this passage of

Son of God is called an idea, and an energy. But it is not, that he is understood to be an unsubstantial idea, or energy, of the paternal mind; but a living idea, energising on the matter of the universe, to stamp it with the forms of things. And his generation is affirmed to be no commencement of his existence, but the first exertion of his powers in the production of external substances; or, to use a more Platonic phrase, the first projection of his energies, προβολη των ενεργημαΐων.

6. If any thing be justly reprehensible in the notions of the Platonic Christians, it is this conceit, which seems to be common to Athenagoras with them all, and is a key to the meaning of many obscure passages in their writings, that the external display of the powers of the Son in the business of creation, is the thing intended, in the scripture

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Athenagoras: — Ην φως νοερον προ φωΐος νοερω, και ωδεν ἑτερον ην η τεΐω ἐνοΐης· αει εν ἑαυΐῳ ων, αει τῳ ἑαυΐω νοι και φωΐι και πνευματι παντα περιεχει· τελος τεΐω ὁ θεος, ὁ κ αγγελος, ὁ δαιμων, ὁ κ ὁσια τις αλλη· παντων γαρ κυριος, και θεος, και παΐηρ, και παντα ὑπ' αυΐω και εν αυΐῳ εστιν· ὁ γαρ Λογος αυΐω προελθων, παντελειος και γονιμος και δημιουργος ἐν γονιμῳ ὑδατι πεσων * εγκυον εποιησε το ὑδωρ.

* Malela has εν γονιμῳ φυσει πεσων, for εν γονιμῳ ὑδατι.

language, under the figure of his generation.* A conceit which seems to have no certain foundation in Holy Writ, and no authority in the opinions and the doctrines of the preceding age: and it seems to have betrayed some of those, who were the most wedded to it, into the use of a very improper language; as if a new relation had taken place between the first and the second person, when the creative powers were first exerted. The indiscretion of presuming to affix a determinate meaning upon a figurative expression, of which no particular exposition can be safely drawn from Holy Writ, is in some degree atoned by the object which these writers had in view. It was evidently their intention to guard the expressions of Scripture from misconstruction. They thought to lead men away from the notion of a literal generation, by assigning to the figure a particular meaning, which it might naturally bear, and which, whether it was the true sense of it or no, seemed not to clash with any explicit part of the Revelation. The conversion of an attribute into a person, whatever Dr. Priestley may imagine, is a notion to

* See the thirteenth of my Letters in Reply, § 12. 15.

which they were entire strangers. They held, indeed, that the existence of the Son necessarily and inseparably attached to the attributes of the paternal mind: insomuch, that the Father could no more be without the Son, than without his own attributes. But that the Son had been a mere attribute, before he became a person; or that the paternal attributes were older than the Son's personal existence, is a doctrine which they would have heard with horror and amazement—with horror, as Christians; with amazement, as philosophers!

7. It is but justice to Dr. Priestley to acknowledge, what indeed he ought to have acknowledged for himself, that, in this misinterpretation of the Platonic fathers, he is not original: that he hath upon his side the respectable authority of two very eminent divines of the Roman church, Petavius and Huetius: which, however, is no more than a single authority; the pious bishop of Avranches, upon this subject, being but the echo of the very learned Jesuit. It is not the season to revive past quarrels: one is therefore unwilling to recollect the motives which induced Petavius to belie his

better knowledge, and to charge the philosophical fathers of the second century with errors, which he was too learned not to know no Platonist could entertain. But at the time when Petavius wrote, the minds of the most enlightened and liberal of the Romanists were so ill reconciled to the separation of the reformed churches from their communion, that it was the fashion for the champions of the Papal superstition, in order to weaken the support which they were sensible the Protestant cause received from the writings of the Fathers of the three first centuries, to take every method to derogate from their authority. And this, it was thought, could in no way be more effectually done, than by bringing them under a suspicion of misbelief, in doctrines which the reformed churches and the Roman hold in equal reverence. The learned Petavius considered not that he sacrificed the cause of our common Christianity to the private views of his own church, in thus attempting to corrupt the stream of tradition at the very fountain-head. His arguments, which Dr. Priestley hath attempted to revive, are examined and confuted, with great erudition and ability, by the excellent

Bishop Bull, in the third section of his Defence of the Nicene Faith.

8. The last specimen which I shall produce of Dr. Priestley's manner of arguing from authorities, shall be taken from his short account of the word *Trinity*.* This word, he says, first made its appearance in the writings of Theophilus bishop of Antioch. But Dr. Priestley thinks "it is not clear "that by it he meant a Trinity consisting of the "same persons that it was afterwards made to "consist of;" and he affirms, that it is certain a Trinity of persons in the Godhead was not meant by Theophilus. And thus Theophilus, for the second time, is brought to give evidence against his own opinion. But whence arises the certainty that a Trinity of persons is not meant by Theophilus? From no other circumstance that I can perceive, but that the word Trinity is expressly expounded, in the text of Theophilus, by God, his Word, and his Wisdom. "The three days," says Theophilus, "which preceded the creation of the "luminaries, were types of the Trinity; of God,

* Hist. of Corrupt., vol. i. p. 99.

"and of his Word, and of his Wisdom."* It hath already been observed, that God, his Word, and his Wisdom, in the phraseology of Theophilus's age, were used for Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. It is unnecessary in this assembly to cite the numerous examples that occur in Theophilus, Tatian, Irenæus, and Origen. It may be more useful to explain the grounds upon which, as I conceive, this language was adopted.

9. We have seen that the Platonic fathers, although they held the eternity of the Second Person no less than of the First, imagined that his generation signified a particular transaction, which took place at a certain time. And it is probable that, although they held the eternity of the Holy Spirit, yet they conceived that the procession expressed some projection of his energies, which took place at the same time with that which they understood to be the generation of the Son. They imagined, that the second person was not properly

* Ὁσαυΐως και αἱ τρεις ἡμεραι [προ] των φωστηρων γεγονυιαι, τυποι εἰσιν της Τριαδος· τυ Θευ, και τυ Λογυ αυΐυ, και της Σοφιας αυΐυ· Theoph. ad Autol. lib. 2. p. 106. Oxon. 1684. I have taken the liberty to insert the preposition προ, the want of it being evidently an omission.

a Son before that event, which they understood by his generation; and they would equally imagine, that the third was not properly the Spirit, before the event which they understood by his procession. But they conceived, that the Second Person had ever been the Word; and that the Third had ever been the Wisdom. Of the First, they conceived that he was not properly a Father, before the Second was a Son; although he ever had been God. I have already given my opinion of these subtle distinctions; for which the best apology (for an apology they need) is the evident good intention of the writers who first maintained them. But upon these distinctions, whether just or visionary, their phraseology seems to have been founded. They thought the names of God, the Word, and the Wisdom, which express, of each of the three Divine Persons, what each hath always been, were appellations to be generally preferred to those of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, which express relations only, which, according to their fancy, had not always been. And this explains the reason why they used the word God, as the peculiar appellation of the Father. It was not that they scrupled to ascribe an equal divinity to all the

Three Persons; but that, rejecting the simpler nomenclature founded on relations, they desired to call each Person by the name which they conceived to be most descriptive of his essence: and of the essence of the Father they could find no name at all descriptive but the general appellation, God.

10. The three names, therefore, God, the Word, and the Wisdom, in the language of Theophilus's age, were understood to be equivalent to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: and when Theophilus expounds the word Trinity, by God, his Word, and his Wisdom, it is just the same thing as if he had rendered it by Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. How this exposition may create a doubt, whether Theophilus's Trinity consisted of the same persons with the Trinity of later ages; how it may produce a certainty that Theophilus's was not a Trinity of Persons in the Godhead, it is not my business to explain. Dr. Priestley should have opened this mystery: but he hath not condescended to give his readers any further light than his own naked assertion, that the thing is, as he would choose that it should be; which in this, as in other cases,

he seems to think may pass for a sufficient proof of any of the paradoxes of his own party.

11. Perhaps his doubt about the real meaning of the word, and his confident persuasion that it was no Trinity of Persons in the Godhead, have arisen from the obscurity of which he complains, in the subsequent part of the sentence, where the Word and the Wisdom are mentioned again. It is indeed but reasonable to suppose, that these words are used in the same sense in both places. But in this second place, the Wisdom, Dr. Priestley might imagine, could be no Divine Person. For in Dr. Priestley's English, the latter clause of the sentence runs thus:—"The fourth day is the type of Man, "who needs light, that the Word may be God, "and the Man Wisdom." This passage, Dr. Priestley observes, is "certainly obscure enough." You all, I am persuaded, agree in the truth of his remark; and you will equally agree in mine, if I venture to say much more of the latter clause, that it is certainly unintelligible—in Dr. Priestley's translation. But turn to the original—the whole obscurity will vanish; and, instead of it, you will find that striking perspicuity of language, which is

the characteristic beauty of Theophilus's style. Having said that the three first days of creation were types of the Trinity, Theophilus adds, "That "the fourth was a type of man, who is in need "of light. That there might be, or, So that there "is, God, the Word, the Wisdom, Man." * This last clause is nothing but an enumeration of all that had been mentioned, as typified in the first four days of creation. To explain how these days were types of what they are supposed to represent, might indeed be difficult: but in the age of Theophilus, the great art of interpreting the Old Testament was supposed to consist in making types out of every thing. The sense, however, of the writer is expressed with the greatest perspicuity. It is evident, from his own exposition of the word, that he speaks of no other Trinity than Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. It appears, therefore, from the testimony of Theophilus, that the word was used at first in no other sense than that which it hath borne in later ages. The word hath not changed its original meaning: but in this, as in most of his

* Οσαυτως και αι τρεις ημεραι [προ] των φωστηρων γεγονυιαι, τυποι εισιν της Τριαδος· του Θεου, και του Λογου αυτου, και της Σοφιας αυτου· τεταρτη δε τυπος εστιν ανθρωπου· ὁ προσδεης του φωτος· ἱνα ᾖ Θεος, Λογος, Σοφια, Ανθρωπος. Ad Autol. lib. 2. p. 106. Oxon. 1684.

assertions, Dr. Priestley is confuted by his own authorities.

12. I feel no satisfaction in detecting the weaknesses of this learned writer's argument, but what arises from a consciousness, that it is a discharge of some part of the duty which I owe to the church of God. It is a mortifying proof of the infirmity of the human mind, in the highest improvement of its faculties in the present life, that such fallacies in reasoning, such misconstructions of authorities, such distorted views of facts and opinions, should be found in the writings of a man to whom, of all men of the present age, some branches of the experimental sciences are the most indebted.

V.

1. May I be permitted to close this long address with a word of exhortation to the younger members of the priesthood?

2. The actual state of things is such, that, to the greater part of those who engage in it, our holy profession must furnish the means of a sub-

sistence. The consequence is, that we are obliged to enter upon it in an early season of our lives, when it is well if we have previously laid a good foundation in our minds of the very first principles of the doctrine of Christ: and a due proficiency in theological studies must be the attainment of future industry. To the noviciates therefore of our order, considered as unfinished theologians, I take the liberty to recommend the diligent study of the works of Bishop Bull; especially of his writings on the subject of the Trinity, with the annotations of Grabe his learned editor. In these they will find an exact and critical detail of the opinions of the fathers of the three first centuries. They will find the faith of the church of England confirmed, and proved to be the original faith, by a tradition traced with certainty to the apostolic age. And they will find every argument refuted, which the Unitarian party have yet been able to form upon their own views of the opinions of the earliest ages.

3. The study of Bishop Bull, if leisure is not wanting, may be followed, or accompanied, with advantage by that of the ecclesiastical historians: of the original historians, I mean,—Eusebius,

Socrates, Sozomen, and Theodoret. As for modern histories, the use of them, without a previous acquaintance with the ancient writers, is rather to be discouraged than recommended. By those who are already learned in the subject, they may be read indeed with emolument, as commentaries on the ancient text of history, as it lies in the original writers, which may occasionally throw light upon dark and doubtful questions. But as books of elementary instruction for beginners, they will generally be pernicious. For it will too often be found to be the case, that the narrative is accommodated, not through premeditated fraud, but in the mere error of prejudice, either to the private opinions of the writer, or to the interests of his sect. Of this Dr. Priestley's work is a striking example. No work was perhaps ever sent abroad, under the title of a history, containing less of truth than his, in proportion to its volume.

4. From ecclesiastical history the student learns what the faith of the church hath at all times been; and he is enabled to separate the pure doctrine of the first age from all later innovations: a matter at all times of the highest moment; but of particular

importance in the present juncture, when the whole ability and learning of the Unitarian party is exerted to wrest from us the argument from tradition. The importance of the argument from tradition rests upon the supposed infallibility of the first preachers. The opinion of their infallibility rests upon the belief of their divine illumination. The consequence of a divine illumination is, that their whole doctrine must have been, not indeed obvious to the human understanding, not within the reach of its unassisted powers to discover, but consonant to the highest reason, nor too difficult, when propounded, for the human apprehension; and, though not free from paradoxes, certainly not encumbered with contradictions. No tradition therefore may avail to prove, that any manifest contradiction, — that a part, for instance, is equal to the whole, or that the same thing in the same respect is at the same time one and many, — was a part of the apostolic doctrine; if the inspiration of the Apostles be admitted. Or, if it should appear, from the evidence of a tradition which cannot reasonably be questioned, that the Apostles really required the belief of contradictions under the name of mysteries, their pretence to inspiration

will be refuted, and the credit of their doctrine overturned. For, as the evidence of intuition is far superior to that of sense, no external evidence may establish the belief of a contradiction, since no testimony that a contradiction is, should be allowed to overpower the intuitive conviction that it cannot be. An inquiry, therefore, into the reasonableness of our faith, as well as just views of its history, is of great importance.

5. The reasonableness of our faith will be best understood from the writings of the fathers of the first three centuries. And among these, those wicked Platonists of the second age, who, in Dr. Priestley's judgment, sowed the seeds of the anti-christian corruption, deserve particular attention, for the great perspicuity with which in general they expound the faith, and the great ability with which they defend it. And as these corrupters brought with them into the church the language of their school, (I say the language, for its opinions, except so far as they harmonised with the Gospel, they had the ingenuity to retract*,) the writings of the

* See the beginning of Justin Martyr's Dialogue with Trypho, and Theophil. ad Autol. lib. ii.

Pagan philosophers, particularly the Platonists, will be of considerable use to the Christian student, as they will bring him more acquainted with a phraseology which is used even by the Christian Platonists: nor for this purpose only, but for some degree of light which they will throw upon the argument. The error of the later Platonists was, that they warped the genuine doctrine of the original tradition, their θεοπαραδοτος θεολογια to a form in which it might be in friendship with the popular idolatry. Their writings therefore are a mine, in which the true metal is indeed mingled with a dross of heterogeneous substances; but yet the richness of the ore is such as may well repay the cost and trouble of the separation. Or, if leisure should be wanting for a minute study of a subject which may seem but of a secondary importance, it will at least be expedient, I had almost said it will be necessary, to know so much of the opinions of heathen antiquity as is to be learned from those authentic documents, which the industry of the indefatigable Cudworth hath collected and arranged, with great judgment, in his Intellectual System.

6. The advantage to be expected from these deep researches, is not any insight into the manner in which the three Divine Persons are united; a knowledge which is indeed too high for man, perhaps for angels; which, in our present condition at least, is not to be attained, and ought not to be sought. But that just apprehension of the Scripture doctrine, which will show that it is not one of those things that "no miracles can prove*," will be the certain fruit of the studies recommended. They will lead us to see the Scripture doctrine in its true light: that it is an imperfect discovery, not a contradiction: that the catholic faith is not properly compared with the tale of Mahomet's journey to the third heaven; his conferences there, while the pitcher of water fell; or even with the doctrine of transubstantiation†: that even the Athanasian Creed is something very different from a set "of contradictions, the most direct which "any person the most skilled in logic might draw "up."‡ A censure, which could hardly have

* "They are things which no miracles can prove," says Dr. Priestley, in his Address to Mr. Gibbon, speaking of the doctrines of the Trinity and the Atonement. — See Hist. of Corrupt., vol. ii. p. 861.

† Hist. of Corrupt., vol. ii. p. 461. ‡ Ibid. vol. i. p. 87.

fallen from our learned adversary, Unitarian as he is, had he but known so common a book as Dr. Waterland's History and Paraphrase. In the opinions of the Pagan Platonists, we have in some degree an experimental proof, that this abstruse doctrine cannot be the absurdity which it seems to those who misunderstand it. Would Plato, would Porphyry, would even Plotinus, have believed the miracles of Mahomet, or the doctrine of transubstantiation? But they all believed a doctrine, which so far at least resembles the Nicene, as to be loaded with the same or greater objections. By every one who will thus combine the studies of divinity and philosophy, the truth of Plato's observation, I am persuaded, will be soon experienced, — that, to those who apply themselves to these speculations, with a humble disposition to be taught, rather than with the unphilosophical and irreligious habit of deciding hastily upon the first view of difficulties, what at first appeared the most incredible, will in the end seem the most evident and certain; and maxims, which seemed at first indisputable, will be discarded.*

* Plato, in Epist. ad Dionys.

7. An extensive erudition in Pagan as well as Christian antiquity, joined with a critical understanding of the sacred text, is that which hath so long enabled the clergy of the church of England to take the lead among Protestants as the apologists of the apostolic faith and discipline; and to baffle the united strength of their adversaries of all denominations. God forbid that, through an indolence which would be unpardonable, we should ever lose the superiority which we have so long maintained. The acquisition of learning is indeed laborious, but the fruit is sweet. The private satisfaction that it must give to every minister of the Church of England, to understand, that his engagements to the establishment are perfectly consistent with his higher obligations to God and Christ, is alone sufficient to repay the labour of the studies which afford this comfortable conviction, and contributes to its daily growth. But private satisfaction is not the end of our pursuits. The nobler end is public edification. It is a maxim of Dr. Priestley's, that every man who, in his conscience, dissents from the established church, is obliged in conscience to be a declared dissenter. I honour the generosity of the sentiment.

——————— φιλον ειη
Φιλειν· πολι δ' εχθρον, α-
τ' εχθρος εων, λυκοιο δικαν υποθευσομαι,
Αλλ' αλλοΐε πάλεων, ὁδοις σκολιαις——

It ought much more to be the sentiment of every one who stands with the received doctrine, to be a declared churchman. If he would reap any solid advantage from the purity of his faith, he must be an open and avowed believer; lest if he confess not Christ, his God and Saviour, before men, he should not be at last confessed before the angels of heaven. If this confession be the general duty of every man, who feels conviction; it is the particular duty of every one, who hath been called to the Evangelists' office. He holds the authority of his commission for no other purpose, but to be a witness of the truth. A conviction that it is the truth, founded on a deep investigation of the subject, will supply him with firmness to persevere in the glorious attestation, unawed by the abilities of his antagonists, undaunted by obloquy, unmoved by ridicule: which seem to be the trials which God hath appointed, instead of persecution, in the present age, to prove the sincerity and patience of the faithful. The advocate of that sound form of

words, which was originally delivered to the saints, hath to expect that his opinions will be the open jest of the Unitarian party: that his sincerity will be called in question; or if "a bare *possibility* of his being in earnest*" be charitably admitted, the misfortune of his education will be lamented, and his prejudices deplored. All this insult will not alarm nor discompose him. He will rather glory in the recollection, that his adherence to the faith of the first ages hath provoked it. The conviction, which he will all the while enjoy, that his philosophy is Plato's, and his creed St. John's, will alleviate the mortification he might otherwise feel in differing from Dr. Priestley; nor suffer him to think the evil insupportable, although the consequence of this dissent should be, that he must share, with the excellent Bishop of Worcester, in Dr. Priestley's "Pity and Indignation."† Not indeed that he will hold any good man's good opinion cheap: or esteem it a light evil, that a conscientious attachment to the truth should embroil him

* Hist. of Corrupt., vol. ii. p. 471.

† To see such men as Bishop Hurd in this class of writers [the defenders of the establishment], when he is qualified to class with Tillotson, Hoadley, and Clarke, equally excites one's pity and indignation. — Hist. of Corrupt., vol. ii. p. 471.

with those, whose talents he will revere, and whose virtues he will love. But he will esteem it but a temporary evil: an evil which Providence in mercy hath appointed for the trial of his faith, and the improvement of his habits of disinterested obedience: an evil therefore which the spirit of a Christian will support; suffering neither the misfortune to detect, nor the injury to irritate. Adoring the wisdom of that mysterious dispensation, which, to heighten human virtue, ordains that it should often miss the reward, which disinterested virtue ever covets most; of that dispensation, which makes even error and rash judgment a useful part of the discipline of the present life; he will not disgrace the cause, which he should support, by any uncharitable conclusions concerning the actual motives, or the future doom, of those whose opinions he may think it his duty to oppose. Nor, in the necessary asperity of debate, will he hastily retaliate their unjust aspersions. He will admit much more than a possibility, that Dr. Priestley may be in earnest in all his misinterpretations of the scriptures and the fathers, and in all his misrepresentations of facts. Appearances to the contrary, however strong, he will refer to the

fascinating power of prejudice, and to the delusive practice of *looking through* authors*, which the historian of religious opinions ought to have read. Though truth in these controversies can be only on one side; he will indulge, and he will avow, the charitable opinion, that sincerity may be on both. And he will enjoy the reflection, that by an equal sincerity, through the power of that blood, which was shed equally for all, both parties may at last find equal mercy. In the transport of this holy hope he will anticipate that glorious consummation, when faith shall be absorbed in knowledge, and the fire of controversy for ever quenched. When the same generous zeal for God and truth, which too often, in this world of folly and confusion, sets those at widest variance whom the similitude of virtuous feelings should the most unite, shall be the cement of an indissoluble friendship; when the innumerable multitude of all nations, kindreds, and people (why should I not add of all sects and parties) assembled round the throne shall, like the

* "I have taken a good deal of pains to read, or, at least, "look carefully through, many of the most capital works of "the ancient Christian writers." — Dr. Priestley's Preface, p. 17.

first Christians, be of one soul, and one mind, giving praise with one consent to Him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb that was slain to redeem them by his blood.

THE END.

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